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BUNYAN'S
PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

BY
JOHN BURBIDGE,

HON. CANON OF LIVERPOOL.

INCUMBENT OF ST. MICHAEL-IN-THE-HAMLET, AND RURAL DEAN OF TOXTETH.

AUTHOR OF

"MY STUDY CHAIR, TRIFLES, AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS." COLLECTED EDITION

"THE CHURCHMAN EQUIPPED." ETC.

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To
Thomas Wilson, Esq.,
of
Oakholme, Sheffield,

The following Pages are Affectionately Inscribed.

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PREFACE

IN the brief preface which I propose appending to this volume it will not be necessary for me to speak of the estimation in which I hold John Bunyan and his immortal Allegory of "The Pilgrim's Progress." This will be found in the pages which follow, especially in the introductory chapter. The remark of Coleridge admits of no improvement. He observed that the child reads "The Pilgrim's Progress" for its story; the theologian for its doctrine; and the critic for its language. More than two hundred years have passed away since its first appearance, and yet the Book of the Bedford Tinker has not lost a particle of its popularity.

I am fully aware that many books somewhat similar to that which I offer to my readers have been issued, and have received a large amount of public regard, but I venture to add my humble contribution to a species of literature of which I think we can hardly have too much.

The origin of the Book is a series of Lectures upon "The Pilgrim's Progress" which I delivered many years ago, and which at the time received a considerable amount of public attention. I have been repeatedly asked if these Lectures could be obtained in printed form. At last I have been able to meet that inquiry with an affirmative answer.

Preface.

I may say that if I have accomplished my intention my Book will be found essentially popular in its character. My hope is that it will be helpful to ministers who take Bunyan's immortal work as the subject for lectures to their people—to those who are connected with the admirable movement for promoting the practice of "Daily Half-hour Readings"—to Mother's Meetings, at which Christian's journey to the Celestial City is always a welcome story—to those who desire to place in the hands of the Young a book which will be found loyal to all the leading features of Evangelical Religion—and, above all, to those who in their daily devotional study read in this great Allegory the history of a soul which may serve, by the Divine blessing, to cheer them in their own pilgrimage from "this world to that which is to come."

I will only add a further hope I entertain. That is that my unpretending effort may render "The Pilgrim's Progress," if not more interesting, more spiritually instructive to the many who will never grow weary of its incomparable pages.

All I ask of my readers is that they will pray that the Holy Spirit may accompany my Book. I send it forth with the earnest desire that it may in some measure advance the glory of God and the best interests of men.

JOHN BURBIDGE.

LIVERPOOL,

DECEMBER, 1893.

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JOHN BUNYAN.

FIRST DAY.

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

“By the grace of God I am what I am.”—1 Cor. xv. 10.

THIS is the noble confession of St. Paul. In him we have a grand illustration of divine sovereignty. And none could be more ready than himself to disavow anything like personal merit or deserving. He could say “In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles,” but he could add “though I be nothing.” He could affirm “I also labour, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily.” And now, in the verse from which I have taken the words which stand at the head of our chapter he declares “I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” And this doctrine of the divine sovereignty was one in which the gifted author of “Pilgrim’s Progress” never ceased to glory. It shines forth in his remarkable history and it was often the subject of his wonderful pen.

In this introductory chapter I purpose dealing with Bunyan, as a Man, as a Christian, as a Writer. It seems to me that a brief notice of his personal history should precede our review of the grandest production of his genius.

And let no one suppose this to be unnecessary in such a day of intellectual advancement as ours. If it be right to keep in memory the great and good ; if it be wise to hold them forth as trophies of that sovereign grace of God in which St. Paul gloried ; if it be a plain duty to point out to our children how sinners can be won and genius can be sanctified, then Bunyan's life-story may well ever be a worthy theme for the pen of the Christian minister.

Bunyan was a burning and shining light in his day. In the judgment of many of the wisest and best of men he was gifted with genius of the highest order.

His eventful life, his extraordinary mental and spiritual trials, have made up as strange a volume as the world contains, and his immortal allegory has been the delight of all readers, at once the wonder of the highest university scholar and the enjoyment of the humblest of the sons of toil.

Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow near Bedford, in the year 1628. His lot was cast in troublous times—an age of excitement and revolution. His history extends over three reigns, those of Charles the First, Charles the Second, and James the Second, including the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. During this period events rolled by which will never lose their interest with Englishmen.

It was a period of much good and much evil, great crimes and great virtues. There were men living in those days "of whom the world was not worthy." It was the age of Laud, and Strafford, and the Stuarts, but it was also that of Baxter, and Milton, and Howe, and Poole, and Herbert, and Usher, and Judge Hale, and Bishop Hall. "There were giants in those days," it may be truly said, and inferior to none in piety, and perhaps superior to all in genius, was John Bunyan.

He tells us in his incomparable autobiography, "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners," that he could not boast of noble blood." He was the son of a brazier or tinker, and he followed his father's occupation. His lowly origin would secure him few educational advantages. He would get what instruction the village school could supply, and we need not wonder, as Macaulay reminds us, that both his spelling and grammar were bad. He was taught to read and write, and that imperfectly. This was about the sum total of Bunyan's education. He is generally represented as having spent a youth inconceivably depraved. But, it seems to me, Bunyan, like many more, was hardly so black as he has been painted. We must take into consideration the age in which he lived, his rank of life, and the associations which surrounded him. He was probably not so bad as many others, though very far indeed from what he should have been. He was not a drunkard—he was not a libertine. He was profane in his language and coarse in his tastes, and I do not doubt his native force of character would make him a ring-

leader among those idle fellows who played pitch and toss on Elstow Green on a Sabbath evening some two hundred and fifty years ago.

Let us say then this blacksmith's apprentice broke the Sabbath. Let us say that he was an habitual swearer and cared only for low company. His life, even in its depravity, was a strong and earnest one. He was probably the coarsest, the most daring, the loudest in voice, the most vehement in manner of all that ungodly throng. This was John Bunyan in his youth. His early life was marked, if not by profligacy by the most determined ungodliness. Let Southey make the best of it, there can be no question in our minds as to this fact. But even then he had his misgivings. In his moments of boisterous mirth and profane merriment he would be haunted by terror. He had forebodings of coming judgment which like a fiend would grasp him with an iron hand. But he laughed on and swore away. He trampled on all these convictions and seemed to dare the Holy Spirit of God to leave him. But Bunyan, like Luther, John Newton, and many others who in some respects resemble him, was preserved for great purposes. These most sinful, most awful days, were days of preparation to tell upon an after history unspeakably precious to the world.

It will be impossible to do more than touch the subject of Bunyan's mental struggles and spiritual conflicts up to the period of his conversion. He passed through an ordeal inconceivably terrible. Every fear which could be aroused by the most vivid fancy, and a heart stirred by the most powerful

emotions, held possession of him. He believed himself within the very jaws of hell, and in the grasp of relentless fiends, and yet, in spite of all, he surrendered none of the vices which enslaved him, but went on in his headlong course, as boisterously, as profanely as ever.

He narrowly escaped death several times. He was nearly drowned twice in the river—he only just avoided the poisonous sting of an adder—in the civil war, when drawn for a soldier in the parliamentary army, the substitute he found was shot through the head—and yet, hardened in sin, he yielded to none of these calls from God, but seemed to say, “Depart from me for I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”

Bunyan married wisely, and therefore well. Speaking of his marriage he says, “And my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us—yet this she had for her portion, ‘The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven,’ and ‘The Practice of Piety,’ which her father had left her when he died.”

He tells us how he used to read these books, and how the simple account of his good wife respecting the godliness of her father had a certain amount of influence upon him.

He began to attend church. His record of this change is very striking. He reminds us of not a few in our own day whose religiousness is mistaken for religion—I fear the successors of those who affected to venerate the memory of the dead saints, paid the

tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but had little care concerning that change of heart which Christ demands, and that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord." Respecting this period of his history Bunyan writes, "Wherefore these books, with the relation, though they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet, they did beget in me some desire to reform my vicious life and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times ; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost ; and there would very devoutly both say and sing, as others did, yet retaining my wicked life ; but withal I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else) belonging to the church ; counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy, and, without doubt, greatly blessed because they were the servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy temple, to do his work therein. This conceit grew so strong in a little time upon my spirit, that had I seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his life) I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him ; yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them (supposing they were the ministers of God) I could have laid down at their feet and have been trampled upon by them ; their name, their garb, and work, did so intoxicate and bewitch me."

In this we perceive the power of superstition

upon the soul, and we see the need of caution lest we mistake it for religion. Stranger as Bunyan was to any change from corruption to holiness, he was nevertheless in his own estimation profoundly religious, having the form of godliness but denying altogether the power thereof. This phase of religious thought has always abounded, and abounds still. There are multitudes whose so-called religion is entirely a matter of form, who are satisfied with the gratification of the natural senses, and who, discharging a round of outward duties, consider they have rendered all that God can require and all that man can do. Such would not miss the daily service in the morning for the world, but they have no scruple about being in the theatre at night. Such are as punctilious about the merest ceremony as the Pharisee of old was about the payment of his seed-tithe, but they see no incompatibility between all this and the most unblushing and undisguised worldliness. Such have a rooted objection to anything like Low Church, but they have no hesitation about the ball-room and the race-course. Shall I be open to the charge of uncharitableness if I say such religion is vain? I think not. If I am to believe the Bible, more than this is demanded—we must feel our sin, know it to be a burden that we cannot bear—we must see Christ as the great sin-bearer and cast our load upon Him—we must thus trust Him, live in Him, and with Him, and lead a life of holy conformity to to His mind and will in the firm assurance that “without holiness no man can see the Lord.”

Bunyan, then, was a formalist, He adored the priest and vestment, and service, but he had not given up profane swearing, and he broke the Sabbath still. But he was "a chosen vessel," and the eye of God followed him. He was a child of grace. We see him in boisterous mirth playing at "cat" on Elstow Green on the Sabbath. He is suddenly arrested by a voice sounding in his ears, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" Did he welcome the heavenly admonition? No—he desperately clung to the conviction that he had sinned too long and too deeply, flung from him any sobering thoughts which struggled for the mastery in him, struck again at the ball and, probably with a fierce oath, gave himself to sin and the devil more resolutely than ever.

One day he was reproved by an abandoned woman for his vile language, and charged with being bad enough to ruin the youth of all the town.

He was silenced for a moment, and, as God would have it, blushing for very shame at reproof from such a quarter, he resolved to break away from the habit of profane swearing.

From that hour Bunyan, if not a converted man, was a changed man. Mysteriously does God's Spirit work in the human heart, and it would seem His genuine operation had begun in the great Dreamer's soul. The proof was not wanting. He felt his formalism to be utterly insufficient. One after another of his bad habits was surrendered, and real desires after better things took their place.

The Bible so long left closed and neglected was read. The historical portions of the Old Testament, which had hitherto been the most attractive, were exchanged for the Epistles of St. Paul. But the season of preparation was by no means over. It may be put down to the man's vivid fancy and strong emotional peculiarities, or we may see in it the direct work of the Holy Spirit, but scarcely a fear, or doubt, or misgiving, or horror which has distressed the children of God was unknown—unfelt by Bunyan. Thoughts of blasphemy would dart into his mind—seasons of gloom would fill him with distress. Difficulties as to his salvation, which not even holy Mr. Gifford, the good Baptist minister, could remove, would drive him well-nigh to distraction. He could not sing—he could not pray—he was so hard he could not shed a tear—and he surrendered himself to the dreadful conviction that he was possessed by the devil.

Now and then a ray of light relieved the darkness. Occasionally a crumb of comfort dropped at his feet. But again the cloud would gather round him, and the wretched man was plunged into the gloom more deeply than ever. One day the horrible thought occupied his mind that he would sell Christ. There was nothing he could do which did not deepen the terrible idea. “He could not eat his food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, nor cast his eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, ‘Sell Christ for this, sell Christ for that, sell Him, sell Him.’”

All this time Bunyan was deeply conscious

of sin—profoundly aware that he needed a better righteousness than his own. He was in darkness, but slowly groping his way out of it. Gradually views of God's love and mercy burst upon him, sweet promises whispered comfort to him, and finding everything out of self and in Christ, he could say " 'T'was glorious to me to see His exaltation and the worth and prevalency of all His benefits; and that because now I could look from myself to Him, and would reckon that all those graces of God that were now green on me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses when their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh! I saw my gold was in my trunk at home: in Christ my Saviour. Now Christ was all; all my righteousness, all my sanctification, and all my redemption."

From this moment Bunyan was a worker for Christ. He became a member of good Mr. Gifford's church, and at his death succeeded him in the office of pastor. And his ministry was a successful one. The preparation he had received eminently fitted him for dealing with perishing sinners. His wild and strange history, known so well to the people of Bedford, gathered crowds around him. His wonderful imagination, his power over his Saxon mother-tongue, his intense earnestness aroused multitudes to a concern for their souls. This went on for five years, but the restoration involved him in danger. Assemblies for religious purposes, excepting connected with the established faith, were declared illegal, and the great preacher of Bedford

was arrested. For twelve long weary years Bunyan was confined in the county prison of Bedford. Subsequently he suffered a short imprisonment in the re-erected gate-house of the old bridge which formerly spanned the Ouse. During the latter imprisonment he wrote "*Pilgrim's Progress*," and "*Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*"—the one an allegory, the other an autobiography. He was released by the kind interference of a Bishop of Lincoln, and continued to preach in different places until the proclamation of liberty of conscience was made in the reign of the Second James. Then he preached in a meeting house of his own, and proclaimed the Gospel of the grace of God, until at length, in the sixty-first year of his age, with triumphant joy he entered the gates of the Celestial City.

"By the grace of God I am what I am." How well could John Bunyan say this. But for the sovereign mercy of God he had remained the swearing tinker of Bedford. Nothing but divine grace from first to last accomplished the wonderful change which was wrought in him. He fought against conviction—he tried to stifle the voice of conscience—he sinned against light and knowledge—he, as it were, dared the omnipotent arm of God and cherished the most blasphemous thoughts that were ever injected into the mind of man—but he was chosen for a special work—he was the selected agent for carrying out divine purposes—he was destined to be a burning and shining light—and Satan could no more claim him for his own than he could claim

the persecutor Saul, or the ascetic Luther, or the dissolute Augustine, or the abandoned John Newton. In our ignorance we may give up such for lost—in our weakness we may despair of ever winning them to truth and righteousness, but God says to us as he said to Ananias of old “Go thy way, he is a chosen vessel to me.”

And this man John Bunyan was a great preacher! Yes he was. I do not suppose for one moment Bunyan’s preaching was only noise. No mere rant would fall from his lips. He knew little of the schools, but he knew his Bible well. From this precious treasury he could draw out “things new and old” and could keep the attention of a congregation of twelve hundred while many an university professor would have sent a twelfth part of that number to sleep. “His rude oratory roused and melted hearers who listened without interest to the laboured discourses of great logicians and Hebraists.” So writes the eloquent historian.

And we may learn something from Bunyan the Preacher. His power over the masses was so great that the Government was quite willing to buy his influence by giving him a municipal office. Where was the secret of this? It lay in the native force and transparency of his character—in the thorough naturalness of his oratory—in the homely vigorous simplicity of his language. He could preach to the rich but he was most at ease among the poor. While learned professors and gay students could talk about the tinker prating, he won the testimony which was given of Him whom he recognised as

Master and Lord, "The common people heard him gladly."

And what wise man does not envy the gift which the unlearned preacher of Bedford possessed? "Covet earnestly the best gifts," said the inspired apostle; and we can quite understand the great Dr. Owen's answer to Charles the Second when the King expressed his surprise that such a learned man as himself could sit down and hear a tinker prate. The great theologian is said to have replied, "May it please your Majesty, could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching I would most gladly relinquish all my learning."

The faculty of addressing masses of men with effect is about the noblest a man can possess. This was Bunyan's power as a preacher, and twelve hundred people would gather together at seven in the morning of a winter's working day to hear him.

In speaking of Bunyan as a writer I tread on ground so often trodden that I almost hesitate, knowing I can only repeat what has been said and written many times before. The foundation of his fame of course is the immortal "Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come"—a work in which the glorious Dreamer, with a wealth of imagery perfectly marvellous, describes the life of a Christian, its difficulties, its temptations, its trials, and its ultimate triumph. When such men as Franklin, Johnson, Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Montgomery, and Macaulay have penned their glowing tributes to the genius displayed in this wonderful book there is little I can add. When a

profound thinker like Coleridge could write "I know of no book, the Bible excepted, as above all comparison, which I, according to my judgment and experience, could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth, according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as the '*Pilgrim's Progress*.'" When a great scholar like Dr. Arnold could pronounce it to be "a complete reflection of Scripture," and he, to use his own words, "still more struck by its profound wisdom." When a noble critic like Macaulay could declare "Bunyan is indeed as decidedly the first of allegorists as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakespeare the first of dramatists." And further, "Though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were but two great creative minds. One of them produced '*Paradise Lost*,' and the other the '*Pilgrim's Progress*.'" When, I say, such testimony as this can be adduced concerning Bunyan and his great work, not another word of eulogy is required.

It is to this wonderful book I now ask the attention of my indulgent readers. I hope they will enjoy with myself the familiar expositions which are to follow.

The charm of the book will be found in its perfect fidelity to Scripture. It is steeped in the Word of God. It is not too much to say that it has had a greater influence in the formation of the theological ideas of the world than any uninspired production in existence. There is a charm about its style which seems to increase with us the older we

grow. We feel that to remove a single quaint idea or homely expression would be sacrilege itself, and we would not exchange Bunyan's pungent wit and racy humour for any of the dignity of Johnson and Macaulay, or any of the ease and elegance of Addison and Steele.

And what Christian does not gather comfort and hope from the great Dreamer's noble legacy? He reads "Pilgrim's Progress" again and again. He knows himself to be the Pilgrim on the heavenly road, and looks forward to the celestial city. He reads of the faithfulness of God to His word, and glories in that sovereign grace which called him from the City of Destruction and will bring him safely to the better land. Well did Southey write, "The 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a book which makes its way through the fancy to the understanding, and thus to the heart. The *child* reads it with wonder and delight. In *youth* we discover the genius it displays; its worth is apprehended as we advance in years; and we perceive its merits still more feelingly in *declining* age." So much for our subject.

In conclusion, I turn from Bunyan the Preacher, and Bunyan the Author, to Bunyan the Christian and the Man.

His piety was of the deepest and truest kind. His vivid imagination and strong emotional tendencies may have sometimes brought him to the borders of fanaticism, but if ever a man felt the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the constraining grace of God, the all-sufficiency of Christ's atoning work, and the surpassing love of his Redeemer, that

man was Bunyan. His unimpeachable integrity when the Government would have bought him over—his unswerving fidelity to duty when he knew the warrant was out for his apprehension—his thorough truthfulness and Christian consistency during his captivity when, like another Joseph, he won the esteem of the keeper of the prison—all these facts place Bunyan before us as a singular instance of the power of the grace of God.

We have not Bunyan's genius. We have no imagination which can call around us any such visions as those which gathered about the great Dreamer in that lonely gaol on Bedford Bridge. But there is nothing in his piety to which we may not attain. His marvellous fancy was a gift peculiar to himself, but grace like that which animated him in his course and sustained him in his trials, all of us may have. When we think of him—the influence which he has had upon the world—we cannot but be confirmed in our belief in that religion whose teachers, for the most part, have been wanting in wealth, and rank, and power, and have been the simple possessors of the grace of God. We remember the Carpenter of Nazareth—"born a babe and yet a king"—we think of the fishermen of Galilee, poor, unlettered, and unknown—we recall the lowly Monk in the German monastery—and we have now in our thoughts the humble Tinker of Bedford, whose preaching reached the hearts of thousands, and whose genius produced the most wonderful book, next to the Bible, which the world contains. I repeat, we cannot reach his genius, but what is there

debars us from his piety? If we take Bunyan's course we shall have Bunyan's reward.

Let no one question the reality of his religion because he has not passed through the same fiery trial. No two conversions in all their details are probably the same. The Lord brings His people to Himself by different paths. The gaoler of Philippi and Lydia of Thyatira would give very far from the same experience.

It is so still. Few are called upon to sustain the same ordeal as that which was the portion of the man who was destined to write "The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come." But let no one question on this account the genuineness of his conversion. The same grace which made Bunyan what he was, changed him from the ungodliness of his youth to the enlightened Christianity of his riper years, will do as much, my reader, for you and for me. We deserve no more than Bunyan, but the grace of God which bringeth salvation is just as rich and just as free for us as it was for him.

Let us not question this. Have I one who, like the illustrious Dreamer, is distressed by misgivings, fears, and doubts? Let the history of Bunyan cheer and comfort him. Did not the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse him? Has it not long since presented him faultless before the throne of God? And will it do less for you? Surely not. Cast yourself, leaning on the promised support of the Holy Spirit, on the same Saviour, and you shall rejoice in the same inspiring hopes and the same glorious reward.

And, Believer, take up the Apostle's confession,
"By the grace of God I am what I am." Like
Bunyan, rest not in self—on anything self can do.
Pray for continual supplies of the grace which called
you from your sins, and will complete the glorious
work in the Paradise of God.

"Depth of mercy ! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me ?
Can my God His wrath forbear ?
Me, the chief of sinners spare ?

I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face ;
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

Whence to me this waste of love ?
Ask my Advocate above !
See the cause in Jesu's face,
Now before the throne of grace.

There for me the Saviour stands,
Shews His wounds, and spreads His hands ;
God is love, I know, I feel ;
Jesus weeps and loves me still."



PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

SECOND DAY.

COMING TO HIMSELF.

“And when he came to himself.”—LUKE xv. 17.

WE now take up the most famous of all allegories—Bunyan's “Pilgrim's Progress.”

And let us, on entering upon this wonderful book—this “highest miracle of genius,” as Lord Macaulay calls it—humbly pray that this effort to set forth the most momentous truths which the Bible contains may receive the sanction and blessing of the Holy Spirit.

We will suffer our thoughts to arrange themselves thus :—

1. Where the Dreamer was.
2. What the Dreamer did.
3. Who the Dreamer saw.

I shall not dwell at any length upon the first two points, because we must lose sight, or nearly so, of Bunyan in the hero of his story ; but it will not

do altogether to omit the reflections which they should be allowed to suggest to us. Let me, therefore, direct you to notice first :—

1. WHERE THE DREAMER WAS. “As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted on a certain place where was a den.” The story opens with a description of the present life, as scriptural as it is true. “*The wilderness of this world.*” The idea we generally attach to the word “wilderness” is that of an abandoned desert, entirely uncultivated, where neither houses have been built nor men can be found.

But this is hardly the Scripture use of the term. It stands in the inspired volume for those places generally attached to large cities and towns, on which the plough has not been used and in which the trees grow wild, but which are devoted to the feeding of cattle. The deserts of Arabia, in which the Israelites wandered for the space of forty years, homeless and houseless, longing for the rest which had been promised to their fathers, is called the wilderness. “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness and grieve him in the desert.” Ps. lxxviii. 40. In Isaiah God is represented as saying “I will make the wilderness a pool of water,” and in Jeremiah, “Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?” When, therefore, Bunyan speaks of “*the wilderness of this world*” he gives us the view which every Christian takes of the present life. He is not at home, but on a journey. He dwells, not in a house of granite which shall stand for ever, but a frail tent which will soon be taken down. Moreover,

this present life cannot supply his wants. Its pools are all dry—its bread cannot satisfy. He is wearied with marching, and yet has no thought of rest. Staff in hand, he is ever pressing on with hopes which gather brightness as he nears the end, and onward and upward he goes, singing as he climbs the hill,

“Here, in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam ;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
A day’s march nearer home.”

You and I, my reader, are in the wilderness of this world. Do we feel the world is really a wilderness to us, possessing comparatively no charms for us, and utterly unable to supply the felt wants of our souls? Happy are those who through God’s grace are able to look above and beyond this fading scene, and in the hope set before them in the Gospel, know, like the patriarchs of old, that they are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

“Guide us, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrims through this barren land ;
We are weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold us with Thy powerful hand :
Strong Deliverer,
Guide us to Thy promised land.”

But as the Dreamer “walked through the wilderness of this world,” he tells us, “*I lighted on a certain place where was a den.*” We cannot doubt that this is an allusion to the dungeon in which he was confined and in which he wrote “Pilgrim’s Progress.” We know nothing about the place, but the name “*den*,” which he gives to it, sufficiently

indicates its character. We have all read in the "Life of Howard, the Philanthropist," something of the wretched condition of the prisons of England in his day, and it needs little imagination to conceive that in the time of Bunyan, a hundred years earlier than that of Howard, they would be no better. Here Bunyan, "the prisoner of the Lord," confined for conscience and the Gospel's sake, and separated from home and friends, read his Bible and "Foxe's Book of Martyrs." But how unconsciously did his enemies further the cause which they meant to crush. In this lonely spot—this "*den*" on Bedford Bridge, Bunyan gathered round him the vision which is about to occupy us, and wrote down that "miracle of genius" which has rendered his name immortal, and done more for God's glory than all the universities which were ever founded and all the scholars that ever lived.

And has it ever struck you what wonderful things have been done in prisons? We think of Luther borne off to the Castle of Wartberg, and in that very place, while his enemies believed the cause of the Reformation crushed, he did a far greater work than that of preaching the Truth with his lips—eloquent as those lips were—for there he wrote his Commentary on the Galatians, and translated the Scriptures into his own noble mother tongue. We think of Rutherford, who penned his beautiful letters, which have cheered and comforted thousands of weary souls, in Aberdeen Castle. We think of the sweet poetry which Madame Guion wrote in the Bastille—of the prayers and praises which went up

from the hearts of our martyred reformers from their cells in the Tower of London ; and, noblest and best of all, we think of Bunyan in that lonely gaol on Bedford Bridge writing “ Pilgrim’s Progress.”

How does God make the wrath of man to praise Him. How powerless are His enemies to oppose His truth. Let this calm our fears in these days of heresy and error. Visible churches may shake, “ wood, hay, and stubble ” may be burnt up, but there is that which no Act of Parliament can crush or tyrant destroy—“ The Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.”

2. WHAT THE DREAMER DID. He tells us, “ And I laid me down in that place to sleep ; and as I slept I dreamed a dream.” There is a beautiful characteristic in “ Pilgrim’s Progress ” which must not escape us. It is probable Bunyan himself was the hero of the book, but he does not tell us so. Indeed, from first to last he loses himself in his great theme. He had been flung into prison for no greater crime than a refusal to conform to the national worship ; his wife and children were thrown upon the world with no one to protect or support them ; but he casts no reproach on his persecutors, and does not even allude to his sufferings for the sake of the Gospel. The man Bunyan—“ the prisoner of the Lord ”—is forgotten. All that he tells us is that he slept and dreamed a dream.

What a noble commentary we have in this upon that sweet verse of Holy Scripture, “ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” Bunyan, conscious of innocence, sleeps in that dismal

prison at Bedford as sweetly as a babe slumbers on the mother's breast. So it was with Peter when he slept between the two soldiers, bound with two chains. So has it been with martyrs and confessors who have closed their eyes at night as prayer has died away upon their lips, and dreamed of that better and brighter land which they should reach in a chariot of fire in the morning.

Oh the power of living Christianity! How superior does it make its possessor to all outward circumstances! "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them." Singing and prayer in the dark, damp, dismal dungeon, with their backs on the cold stone and their feet in the stocks! Christian, the power of man can do thee no harm. It may break up the house, but the living tenant it cannot reach. "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul." When outward circumstances perplex and trouble thee, picture to thyself Bunyan sleeping peacefully in Bedford Gaol. Most truly did the old poet write:

"Poverty ne'er brings dishonour,
Hardship ne'er breeds sorrow's smart,
If bright conscience takes upon her
To shed sunshine round the heart."

"*And as I slept, I dreamed.*" Whether the great story was suggested to Bunyan in a dream or whether he merely threw it into, as the title of his book seems to indicate, "the similitude of a dream," matters little. He was well acquainted with his Bible, and he knew how much God had done by

dreams in the days of old. He would remember the words of Elihu, "For God speaketh once, yet twice, when man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed." Job xxxiii. 14.

He would think of Jacob, when he made the rough stones his pillow, and watched the silent stars through the night, and beheld that strange ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Gen. xxviii. 12.

He would think of Joseph, when in his mysterious vision he saw his brothers' sheaves making obeisance to his sheaf, and when he received the homage of the sun, and moon, and the eleven stars. Gen. xxxviii. 5, 10.

He would think of Gideon, and Solomon, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel, and Joseph, the husband of Mary. He would know full well that dreams have come from God. He would feel that not always is the great poet right—

"Dreams are but children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy."

And with such thoughts as these upon him who need be surprised that the wonderful creation of that busy brain in Bedford's lonely prison should come forth to the world as "*The Pilgrim's Progress*," in the similitude of a dream.

"And as I slept I dreamed a dream." Now to our third point.

3. WHO THE DREAMER SAW. He saw a man clothed in rags, with his face from his own house, a

book in his hand, and a burden on his back. He saw him open the book and read, and as he read he wept and trembled, and, unable to restrain himself, he brake out into a lamentable cry, saying "What shall I do?" The man went home, and, as long as he could, kept his distress from his wife and children. But able no longer to hide his terror from them he told them how he was undone by reason of the burden on his back, how he had been informed that the city in which they lived was to be burned with fire, and that all of them must perish unless some way of escape could be found. His relations were amazed and, thinking some "frenzy distemper" had seized him, they got him to bed. But in the morning when they inquired of him if he were better, he only told them worse and worse.

They then exchanged pity for reproach, sometimes chiding and sometimes deriding him, and sometimes neglecting him. "Wherefore," says Bunyan, "he began to retire to his chamber to pray for and pity them, and also to condole his own misery. He would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and sometimes praying: and thus for some days he spent his time." Behold here, a picture of the sinner aroused to a sense of sin—like the poor prodigal in the parable—*coming to himself*—"when he came to himself." Let us not lose a word of this wonderful description. It is a "complete reflection of Scripture." The man is "*clothed in rags, standing in a certain place.*" We at once think of the poor prodigal among the swine of the field. When he came to himself he thought of his wasted fortune, his in-

jured father, and his forfeited home ; and turning his eyes on the rags which covered him, he exclaimed, in bitterness of soul, “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” What a picture of the awakened sinner with nothing but the rags of his own righteousness upon him, reminding us of the words of Isaiah, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah lx. 6.

The man has “*his face from his own house.*” He has his back to the City of Destruction. He is resolved to “flee from the wrath to come.” He dare not hesitate. “Escape for thy life” rings in his ears—“Escape, lest thou be consumed.”

Thus is it with the awakened sinner. He has his back to the world—his face heavenward. The words of Christ come home to his heart. “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke xiv. 33.

The man has “*a book in his hand*” which he reads, and over which he weeps and trembles. What he reads flashes light into his mind. “Up, get you out of this place ; for the Lord will destroy this city” fills him with terror and makes him cry out in agony of soul, “What shall I do ?”

Thus again is it with the awakened sinner. The book in his hand is the Bible—the precious Word of God. Its first voice to him is that of terrible warning, and fills him with distress. “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” Ezek xviii. 4. “Flee from the wrath to come.” Matt. iii. 7. “The wages of sin is death.” Rom. vi. 23. “The wicked shall

be turned into hell." Ps. ix. 17. He weeps and trembles, and, like the Philippian gaoler who "came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas," he exclaims, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 29, 30.

The man had "*a great burden on his back.*" This weighs him down, and is as a chain upon his feet.

Thus, once more, is it with the awakened sinner. He carries with him a load which is ready to crush him. He cries out with the Psalmist, "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Ps. xxxviii. 4. He looks at himself, not in the mirror of the world, which palliates and excuses sin, but in the light of the "*book in his hand*" which denounces it as the thing which God hates and must and will punish. His language is, "My burden is intolerable," and in that of the 38th Psalm—he says "I am troubled ; I am bowed down greatly ; I go mourning all the day long." His burden is sin—sin felt for the first time—sin unpardoned. What a picture we have here of one aroused by the Spirit of God to a sense of sin. How simple is the description, but how true it is to Scripture in every point. And in Pilgrim's treatment from his family how common a scene is laid before us. They first treat him as if he were insane—they prescribe bed and rest for the settlement of his fears—but, finding this fail, they abuse him, and, what they could not do by coaxing or ridicule, they try to accomplish by persecution and neglect. Shall I be wrong if I call this scene a common one? I

think not. It was not without a deep meaning our Lord said—"A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Matt. x. 36. All the opposition which Pilgrim received only drove him to retirement, to the more earnest study of "*The book in his hand*," and to prayer. He could say of those so near and dear to him, who ought to have been helps instead of hindrances to him, in the language of poor Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all." And how many at the commencement of their Christian course have passed through the same fiery trial? Friends, so-called, but alas most truly enemies, have tried to lull their fears by opiates from the Father of Lies. They have ridiculed their scruples and invented a thousand schemes for bringing them back to the world and making them as thoughtless and careless as themselves.

And who are those who pass unscathed through the fiery ordeal of family opposition? They are those with whom spiritual anxiety is no mere emotion aroused by temporary excitement, but a deeply rooted conviction planted in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Nothing but this will stand. Possessing this the light that ariseth in the darkness shall prove no meteoric flash, but like the light of which the wise man speaks, it "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Prov. iv. 18.

Awakened sinner, see then Pilgrim as a portrait of yourself. Does the opposition you meet with send you to retirement, your Bible and private meditation and prayer? With him there was no looking back. His hand was on the plough and forward he resolved

to go. Let it be so with you. Flee from the City of Destruction. Take care you have exchanged the rags for the wedding garment of your Saviour's spotless righteousness—keep faithful to the Book in your hand—the precious Word of God—and, though the burden of sin is heavy now, doubt not the hour is coming when it shall roll off from you at the foot of the Cross.

You have made the wise choice. I tell you not that there are no rivers to cross and no battles to fight. I would not lead you to expect a bed of roses. There are conflicts many and great—there are enemies many and strong—but “as thy day so shall thy strength be.”

There is no clearer truth revealed in the Bible than that God fights for His people. As Moses said to Israel, “The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace.” And you may depend upon it we glorify God when we implicitly trust Him. He would calm all our fears. His language to every pilgrim on the road to heaven is this, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Take heed, and be quiet; fear not; neither be faint-hearted.” Precious truth! The world is our battle-field—we are soldiers. Let us inscribe on our banner, “The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” We have a stern warfare to wage—we have to contend for every inch of our way. There is Satan to be driven back—there is the flesh to be mortified—there is the world to be conquered. But “greater is He that is with us than those who are against us.” Let this be our encouragement. The battle is inevitable—but the victory is ours.

Here we leave our Pilgrim. He is fairly on his journey to the Celestial City. Be it yours to tread the same path, and, by God's grace, you shall reach the same end.

“Onward, Christians, onward go,
Join the war and face the foe ;
Fight, nor think the battle long—
Soon shall victory wake your song.

Let not sorrow dim your eye,
Soon shall every tear be dry ;
Let not fears your course impede,
Great your strength, if great your need.

Onward, then, to glory move,
More than conquerors you shall prove ;
Still through danger, toil, and woe,
Christian soldiers, onward go.”



THIRD DAY.

THE FAITHFUL GUIDE AND THE CARNAL NEIGHBOURS.

*“Then shall we know if we follow on to know the
Lord.”—HOSEA vi. 3.*

LAST week we left our Pilgrim walking in the fields, far away from the cruel reproaches and ridicule of his ungodly friends, reading his book, and, greatly distressed, crying out “what shall I do to be saved?” The Dreamer further tells us that he saw him look this way and that way, and yet stand still, not knowing which way to go.

What a vivid picture we have here of a sinner awakened to the conviction of sin. We are reminded of the gaoler of Philippi. We think of that midnight scene, when, as the foundations of the prison rocked beneath him, he flung himself at the feet of Paul and Silas, and besought them to tell him how he could make salvation his own. In Pilgrim there was the deepest spiritual desire. Because bewildered as to the path he should take he had no longings to return to the City of Destruction. His

mind was fully made up. He was an anxious inquirer after the right road. That was his position. It is so with every truly awakened sinner. He has a fixed resolution to forsake sin. He has determined, by the help of God, to keep his back to the world. But it is only twilight in his soul. Darkness is still around him, and he asks the question of a perplexed and burdened spirit: "which way shall I go?"

Happy are those who have reached this point in their spiritual history. It is a sign concerning which there can be no mistake when a man has turned his back on sin and wants to know how he can be saved. We never need fear that such a man will long grope his way in the dark. Well has the old divine said, "when God designs mercy for his people, he gives them a heart to know him."—Jer. xxiv. 7. Genuine conviction of sin—that which leads on to true conversion of heart—is always associated with the strong desire for spiritual knowledge. If this be wanting, though there may be loud cries, strong emotions, intense excitement, we have reason to doubt if the change we see be the work of the Spirit at all.

In our Pilgrim we have a picture of the awakened sinner. He has his face from the City of Destruction, but he does not know which way to go.

We have now to bring three characters upon the scene.

1. THE FAITHFUL GUIDE—EVANGELIST. "I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and he asked, wherefore dost thou

cry? He answered, Sir, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first nor able to do the second. Then said Evangelist, why not willing to die, since this life is attended by so many evils? The man answered, Because I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave, and I shall fall into Tophet. And, Sir, if I be not fit to go to prison, I am not fit to go to judgment, and from thence to execution: and the thoughts of these things make me cry."

We must notice in this the man saw his danger in the light of the book in his hand. He feared death, aware though he was of the many evils of this life, entirely because of the burden on his back, and in the thought of prison—judgment—execution—he saw steps in misery, each one deeper than the other, which filled the present with despair and the future with "the blackness of darkness for ever." The awakened sinner reads his sentence in the Word of God: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."—Heb. ix. 27. He dare not think of death as an escape from the troubles of this world, but only as the summons which will bring him to the bar of an offended God. He feels the weight of sin as a burden ready to sink him lower than the grave. His guilt stares him in the face and fills him with terror. Conscience tells him he is tried and condemned. In its dark *prison house* he cannot even look out through the bars of hope. He pictures the great assize when *judgment*,

consciously deserved, shall be passed upon him, and realizes all the horror of its *execution* when "Depart from me" shall consign him to the destiny of hell.

Thus was it with our Pilgrim—thus is it with many an awakened sinner.

"Then said Evangelist, If this be thy condition, why standest thou still? He answered, Because I know not whither to go. Then he gave him a parchment roll; and there was written within, 'Flee from the wrath to come.' The man therefore read it, and, looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, Whither must I flee? Then, said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, Do you see yonder wicket-gate? The man said, No. Then said the other, Do you see yonder shining light? He said, I think I do. Then said Evangelist, Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate, at which when thou knockest it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

Let us first determine who Evangelist is intended to represent. He does not bear this beautiful name without reason. "Evangelist" signifies a publisher of good news—a preacher of the Gospel. Can we doubt, therefore, that our Pilgrim's faithful guide was the minister of Christ—not, I think, necessarily "holy Mr. Gifford" of Bedford, but the earnest and devout preacher of "the Truth as it is in Jesus." And with what Christian simplicity and tact he dealt with this poor anxious inquirer. He gave him no mere human counsel but divine direction—"a parchment roll"—no word of man which

might be wrong, but a text of Scripture which must be right. But this was not all. To leave him there would have been to have stopped short at half his message. Every true minister of Christ is not only an ambassador of truth, but likewise “a son of consolation.” Evangelist pointed to the distant wicket-gate. The Pilgrim could not see so far. There was a shining light in the same direction. It was not very clear to him, but he thought he could see it. This was enough. “Keep that light in your eye,” said Evangelist, “and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which when thou knockest it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.”

Shall we not see in this the faithful Christian minister dealing with the awakened sinner? He is no Romish priest directing him to the uncertainties of Tradition, but the ambassador of God with his finger on the inspired Word—“Flee from the wrath to come.” The Bible is the Protestant Rule of Faith. This, and this alone, under the teaching of the Spirit, is able to make men wise unto salvation. And Evangelist points to the *wicket-gate*. What can this be but the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom Pilgrim is directed to go at once, *burden and all*? But he could not see the gate. So it is often with the awakened sinner. You may say to him, “Flee to Christ,” but he will reply, “Where is He?” You may declare, “He died for sinners;” but he will answer, “Did He die for me?” But Pilgrim saw *the light*, or thought he saw it. Oh, how sweet a picture we have here of the early dawn “which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” In

this brief description we have condensed the spiritual history of thousands. How many there are among us who can recall the time when we could not see Christ, the wicket-gate, but when *we thought* we could see the light. At that hour we were represented by the blind man in the Gospel, who, when partially restored, "saw men as trees walking," that is, indistinctly. Through grace we followed the light—obscured, imperfect as it was; and now, through the same grace, we see "every man clearly." "Keep that light in your eye," said Evangelist to Pilgrim. See a beautiful comment on the words of our text—"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."

Who, then, are those who reach the Saviour and attain the fulness of Gospel blessing? They are those who are faithful to the light they have and follow the convictions of their awakened souls. They may, as in the case of Brainerd, be years finding peace in Christ—rest at the wicket-gate. They may, as in the case of St. Paul, part with all spiritual darkness as in a moment, and straightway preach Christ in the synagogue that He is the Son of God. But if, like Pilgrim, they but follow the light they have they shall "go from strength to strength," until "every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

And let us see the wisdom of taking sweet counsel with the faithful minister of Christ. What Evangelist was to Pilgrim, the Christian minister is to many an anxious inquirer.

As ministers, we do not magnify ourselves, but,

with St. Paul, we magnify our office. We are no priests to minister at altars and offer sacrifice, but we are ambassadors of God, and can point to the wicket-gate. We have no power to rescue a single soul from ruin ; but if one asks us the way of salvation, we can return the answer, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Poor, trembling inquirer, take counsel with Evangelist. It was well for Luther that he did so. We remember how the great Reformer in the cloister lived on a little bread and a small herring, tortured his body for the sake of his soul, and thought to purchase heaven by the rigour of an ascetic life. We have all read how the poor monk learned the utter insufficiency of all this to give him peace with God and calm the troubled heart within him. Every effort he made only served to increase his distress, and, to use the words of the historian, " the young monk crept like a shadow through the long galleries of the cloister that re-echoed with his sorrowful moanings." But "*Evangelist*" was not far off.

Even the gloomy walls of the monastery can contain souls which can rise above the errors of a system and find refuge in the love of a crucified Redeemer. Such a man was Staupitz, the Vicar General, who, amid conflicts closely resembling those of Luther, had struggled out of darkness and found peace at the feet of Christ. The young monk unburdened his heart to the Vicar General. At last he had found one who could understand him. He told him all his troubles, perplexities, and doubts. Staupitz was a true "*Evangelist*." He prescribed

no further mortifications—no more tortures. He pointed to the wicket-gate. “Why,” said he, “do you torment yourself with all these speculations and high thoughts? Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that He has shed for you : it is there that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, throw yourself into the Redeemer’s arms. Trust in Him—in the righteousness of His life—in the atonement of His death. Do not shrink back ; God is not angry with you, it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favour. He says to you, You are my sheep ; you hear my voice ; no man shall pluck you out of my hand.”

The young monk did not at once see *the wicket-gate*, but he soon saw *the light*. These words—so truly scriptural and so thoroughly Protestant—went to his heart. The dawn of better things had risen upon Luther.

It was well for Merle d’Aubigne that he took counsel with “*Evangelist*.” When a student of the University he was oppressed with doubts. He went to a venerable professor, of profound attainment and ripened spiritual wisdom. He told him all his perplexities and fears. The old man, like a true “*Evangelist*,” simply pointed to the wicket-gate. He said—“Were I to rid you of these, others would come. There is a shorter way of destroying them. Let Christ be to you *really* the Son of God—the Saviour—and His light will dispel the darkness, and His Spirit lead you into all truth.”

The young student could not at once see *the wicket-gate*, but he soon saw *the light*. In the immortal work which bears his name “The History of the Reformation,” we see that the advice of “*Evangelist*” was taken, and in the sanctified genius of the noble historian we learn how true are the words of our text, “*Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.*”

Have I a reader who, like our Pilgrim, is weighed down by the sense of sin? Have I one crying out in deep anxiety of heart, “Whither must I flee?” May I be “*Evangelist*” to you? I honour you for all your good resolutions about amendment of life. You are quite right in determining to break off from all the old friendships and associations which have been so hurtful to you. But let me tell you that the course you are adopting will not bring you peace. “*Do you see yonder wicket-gate? Do you see yonder shining light?*” You must go at once—just as you are—with all your burden—to Christ. Let nothing keep you back. Do not say “I need repentance—I want faith.” Neither repentance nor faith can save you. All you require is to get to *the wicket-gate*—the foot of the Cross. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Follow the light you have, though it may appear to you little more than a spark. Never fear it will lead to *the wicket-gate*. The Spirit of God never commences a work to leave it half finished. “Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto; so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt

do." "*Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.*"

Then the Dreamer tells us that, after the advice of Evangelist, the man began to run. He had not run far from his door when his wife and children ran after him begging him to return. But their cries only gave swiftness to his feet. He put his fingers into his ears, and ran on crying "Life ! life ! eternal life !" He remembered Lot's wife. "He looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain."

This picture has had many a counterpart. The first convictions of sin have been well-nigh trampled out by well-meaning but ungodly relations. Who has not known the wearying conflict which one in a family has had to carry on when resolved for the sake of the soul to give up much that is in the world? But hundreds have stood firm. They have been deaf to all entreaties. They have remembered to their eternal joy the words of Christ, "If any man come to me, and hate not (that is, does not love less) his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—Luke xiv. 26.

I have known those who have been sorely tried. Their foes have, indeed, been those of their own household. But they have planted their feet upon the Rock, and by the grace of God have defied all comers. They have been able to say,

"If thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die ;
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee ?"

Then the Dreamer relates how the neighbours all came out to see the man run, and how, as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried out for him to return. Two, bolder than the rest, resolved to fetch him back.

This brings us to the other two characters introduced upon the scene.

2. THE CARNAL NEIGHBOURS—OBSTINATE AND PLIABLE.—These two men both came from Pilgrim's native place—the City of Destruction. They come up to him and make no secret of their purpose. In answer to his inquiry, “Neighbours, wherefore come ye?” they say, “To persuade you to go back with us.” But Pilgrim had been too well taught by good Evangelist. He told Obstinate and Pliable that the city in which they lived, and to which they would win him back, was doomed to be burned with fire and brimstone, adding, “be content, good neighbours, and go along with me.”

From this moment, in the narrative, Pilgrim bears the name of *Christian*. In vain he assured Obstinate that what he was seeking was infinitely more valuable than all he had forsaken, and he assured him if he would join him in his journey he should share everything with him, sweetly adding, “for there, where I go, is enough and to spare. Come away, and prove my words.”

In answer to an inquiry from Obstinate, he told him of the inheritance, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, laid up in heaven, and safe there, to be bestowed at the time appointed on them that diligently seek it.—1. Peter i. 4; Heb. xi. 6. And

to show him such was no mere fancy of his own, he said "Read it so, if you will, in my book."

Obstinate scornfully replied, "Tush, away with your book; will ye go with us or no?"

Christian told the hardened sceptic his mind was fully made up. "No, not I, because I have laid my hand to the plough." Hearing this, Obstinate tried to induce Pliable to return and leave the poor bewildered fool, as he thought Christian, to pursue his way.

But the good things of which Christian had spoken had impressed the mind of Pliable, if they had not influenced his heart. There was something about this prospect which looked very bright and pleasant to him. At the first blush it certainly seemed most desirable to possess all these glorious things of which Christian had spoken. He therefore timidly rebuked Obstinate for his conduct, and declared his inclination to accompany Christian on his journey.

The intimation was received by Obstinate with the bitterest derision, and scornfully calling Christian "a brain-sick fellow," he said to Pliable, "Go back, go back, and be wise."

Again Christian addressed his wavering neighbour, and assured him that there were the things of which he had spoken and many more besides; all to be read in the book in his hand, and as the truth of it, "Behold," he said, "all is confirmed by the blood of Him that made it." Pliable made a weak attempt at decision. At last he avowed his intention to go with Christian; but, as if he had almost promised

too much, he asks, "but, my good companion, do you know the way to this desired place?" Then Christian told him of his faithful guide Evangelist, and of the instructions which they should receive at the gate about the way. Christian and Pliable then went together, and Obstinate scornfully declaring he would be "no companion of such misled fantastical fellows," returned to the City of Destruction.

Obstinate and Pliable have never wanted their followers in any age. There have always been those who have been railers at all religion, the revilers of the Word of God, and who have treated with supreme contempt those who have been weak and foolish enough, as they have considered them, to follow the world's Redeemer. Such, baffled in argument, have no better weapons than ridicule and scorn, and they use them freely. Christians are all weak-brained, misguided, fantastical with them. Scepticism generally lays claim to a monopoly of wisdom. Obstinate has had a host of descendants. The race of scoffers is not dead yet.

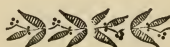
And there have likewise always been those who have been captivated at times with the good things of the land of promise. The Pliables often look the most hopeful of the flock. For a time they are all that the most earnest minister can desire. They agree to all we say. But they are but stony-ground hearers. Their religiousness is entirely emotional. The root of the matter is not in them. They feel no burden on their back—they have no consciousness of guilt—they have never counted the cost. The Book of books has nothing for them—they are High

Church to-day, Low Church to-morrow, and no Church in the end. Such are the Pliables. Infirm of purpose, fruitless in life, they are the bane of our churches. But more of this to-morrow. Meanwhile, let us walk by the side of Christian. He has turned his back on all that was dearest to him. His faith is in the blessed Book in his hand, and he believes its testimony because it is confirmed by the blood of Him who gave it. He has fought and overcome in every temptation. Obstinate has been driven from the field, and Pliable for a time bears him company.

May it ever be so with us. Oh, that each may be able to say, "I have laid my hand to the plough."

“Be brave, my brother !
Fight the good fight of faith
With weapons proved and true ;
Be faithful and unshrinking to the death,
Thy God will bear thee through ;
The strife is terrible,
Yet 'tis not, 'tis not long ;
The foe is not invincible,
Though fierce and strong.

Be brave, my brother !
The recompense is great.
The kingdom bright and fair ;
Beyond the glory of all earthly state
Shall be the glory there.
Grudge not the heavy cost,
Faint not at labour here,
'Tis but a lifetime at the most,
The day of rest is near.”



FOURTH DAY.

TESTING TIMES.

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.”—LUKE ix. 62.

THESE words constitute the answer which our Lord gave to one who said to him, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.” The request thus made appears a very reasonable one and the Saviour’s reply seems, at first sight, somewhat harsh. But we need not doubt it was both wise and kind. He who knew what was in man was fully aware that to permit this would make after-decision extremely doubtful. It is probable the man made the request with a trembling voice and a downcast look. The Saviour would see the moment was a crisis in his spiritual history. It was now or never. Instant decision was required and everything else must yield.—“*No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.*” Respecting the saying itself, I may observe that it was probably proverbial. It is hardly intel-

ligible if we think only of the agriculture of our own country, but becomes very clear when we regard the light and inexpensive plough employed in the fields of Palestine. It consists of two poles which cross each other at the ends near the ground. The pole turned towards the oxen is fastened to the yoke and draws the implement; the one turned towards the driver serves at one extremity as a ploughshare, and at the other as a handle. "I first saw this plough in use," says a traveller, "in the neighbourhood of Gaza, the country of the Philistines. I often saw the peasants breaking up the soil, and always with a plough having but one handle. The fashion of it recalled to my mind the manner in which the Saviour has expressed himself in reference to the inconstant, faithless disciple." "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." It is interesting to find this instance of exact conformity to Oriental habits. Had the plough in that country been made as ours is made the language would have been "No man, having put his *hands* to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." The spiritual significance of the Saviour's words is very clear. He who has his hand on the plough must be intent upon his work. He who is looking either behind him or about him is not fit for an employment demanding all his attention. It is so with religion. There must be no lingering looks at the world we have professed to have forsaken. We must not be afraid of hurting the feelings of our friends, or incurring their displeasure by the sacrifices we have made for

the sake of Christ. To manifest such fears would be to proclaim ourselves half-hearted, and unworthy to be the followers of the Saviour. We must go forward at all risks. *“No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.”*

This may very fitly introduce to us again Christian and Pliable talking over the plain all about the glorious things of the celestial city. You will remember the description I gave of Pliable. Excited with the prospect so vividly described by Christian, he resolves to share his company. He was most curious about all these wonderful sights. He quite longed to see them. We left them just after the return of Obstinate to the City of Destruction. The Dreamer tells us, “Now I saw in my dream that, when Obstinate was gone back, Christian and Pliable went talking over the plain: and thus they began their discourse:

Christian: “Come, neighbour Pliable, how do you do? I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me: had even Obstinate himself but felt what I have felt of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back.”

The conversation which followed is deeply interesting. Christian, with his heart full of spiritual ecstasy, tells Pliable something of the unspeakable things recorded in his book, most surely true, because “made by Him that cannot lie”—of the crowns of glory and the shining garments—of the place where there is no crying and no sorrow—

of the glorified saints all loving and holy—of the elders with the golden crowns and the virgins with their golden harps—and of the glorious army of martyrs, “all well, and clothed with immortality as with a garment.”

When Pliable heard all this, and that the Lord of the country had declared in his Book that he would bestow it on them freely, he said, “Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things. Come on, let us mend our pace.” Christian replied, “I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is upon my back.”

Carefully notice, there are striking differences between these two men. Pliable would run, Christian can scarcely crawl. Pliable has a spirit as light as air, Christian has a heart as heavy as lead. Where is the difference? It is all in Christian's avowal, “This burden that is on my back.” Let us see in this the distinction between emotional excitement and conviction of sin. In the first there is the enraptured spirit, in the second there is the broken heart. In the first there is the speech of pride, “All these things have I kept from my youth up;” in the second there is the bitter cry, “Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” In the first we may see Saul, King of Israel; in the second, Peter, the disciple of our Lord. In the first we may find Judas Iscariot; in the second, the apostle Paul. My reader, to have lively emotions is one thing, to have real conviction of sin is quite another thing. The imagination can make us like Pliable, the grace of God alone can

make us like Christian. The profession of joyful feelings may bring us to say, "Let us mend our pace," but the possession of a felt burden alone can bring us to the foot of the cross. As we shall see, Pliable did not get far, but Christian heard the bells of the city ring for joy. Ah, it is better to be slow with Christian than fast with Pliable. Better to be a burdened sinner than a stony-ground hearer. Better to feel that we are lost than only dream that we are saved. Take care you do not mistake mere excitement for real religion. There is no dependence on anything but a truly awakened soul, and a thoroughly humbled heart. There must be the burden of sin or there is no work of the Spirit. This must be our first petition at our Saviour's throne:—

"With my burden I begin,
Lord, remove this load of sin!
Let Thy blood for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt."

Then, and not till then, can we say—

"Lord, I come to Thee for rest,
Take possession of my breast;
There Thy blood-bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign.

While I am a pilgrim here,
Let Thy love my spirit cheer!
As my guide, my guard, my friend,
Lead me to my journey's end!"

And this brings me to observe that there is no safety except in prayer and communion with God. If we dwell so much on the glory to be revealed that we neglect the present duty of using means, we shall soon part with our joy.

It was so with Christian. Testing times were his. We have now to consider two temptations which assailed him. Pliable shared the first—the second he bore alone.

1. THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND.—Our Dreamer tells us: “Now I saw in my dream that just as they had ended this talk, they drew nigh* to a very miry slough that was in the midst of the plain, and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the Slough was Despond. Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of *the burden that was upon his back*, began to sink in the mire.

Then said Pliable, Ah! neighbour, where are you now?

Truly, said Christian, I do not know.

At that Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill-speed at our first setting out, what may we expect betwixt this and our journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house. So away he went, and Christian saw him no more.”

Meanwhile Christian was tumbling about in the Slough, but struggling to get out at the side furthest from his house and in the direction of the wicket-gate. But every effort failed *because of the burden that was upon his back*.

At this extremity, a man whose name was *Help*, came to him and asked him what he did there. Christian told him how he was making his way by Evangelist's direction to the wicket-gate, and how on his road he had fallen into the mire. Help asked him why he did not look for *the steps*. Christian confessed that fear followed so hard after him that he fled the next way and fell in. Then Help, saying, "Give me thy hand," drew him out, and, setting him on sound ground, let him go on his way.

There is a great deal in all this which must be carefully noticed. It seems a sad termination to all the rapturous talk in which Christian and Pliable had been indulging. There was a strange contrast between this Slough of Despond and the robes of white and crowns of glory.

And now what does this misfortune which came upon the Pilgrims teach us? Christian and Pliable both represent men professing spiritual desire, both with their backs to the City of Destruction—that is the world,—both with their faces towards the Celestial City—that is heaven.

Full of the good things promised in the Book, they were heedless as to their road, and stuck fast in the Slough of Despond. In other words they were so ravished by the thought of the crown at the end, that they quite forgot all about the cross by the way. They were so much taken up with the thought of the glorious things of the kingdom of God, that they were altogether unmindful of the fact that it must be through much tribulation that they must enter it.

This is a mistake which the anxious and inquir-

ing often make. They start well—full of new hopes, anticipating no doubts, and fearing no weariness, singing,

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, City of our God.”

But, alas, they have forgotten that the way is narrow, the road rough, the difficulties immense, and the journey long.

“*Being heedless they fall suddenly into*” the Slough of Despond. In the thought of the prospects they forget the promises. They should have prepared thus early in their course for doubts and perplexities, and had they looked for “*the steps*” of promise they would never have had to cry out with the Psalmist, “I sink in deep mire where there is no standing.” In other words they would have passed unharmed through the Slough of Despond.

Such are testing times. Pliable, not only neglectful of, but entirely ignorant about, the character of the way, supposing it to be all flowers, and believing it to be all sunshine, has enough of the journey at the first trial. All his courage is cooled, and all his joy quenched. He is soon out of the Slough of Despond on the side next to his own house and on his way back to the City of Destruction. See a picture of the stony-ground hearer. “The same is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”—Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

Who has not known many such? They begin,

so to speak, too well. They leap at once into assurance. No doubts assail them—no fears disturb them. They become communicants, they join the Sunday School, they visit the poor, they lead off in prayer. But difficulties, of which they never dreamt arise; opposition, the more trying because from the dearest friends, confronts them; they are called upon to make sacrifices which are not only painful but inconvenient, and what follows? Their scruples are soon gone, they break away from all their new friendships, and go back to that world which in heart they had never left. The Slough of Despond had been too much for them. We say with the Dreamer, “*Thus much concerning Pliable.*”

With Christian it was very different. He was not altogether ignorant of the character of the way, he was simply neglectful of it. He did not study his book sufficiently. He ought to have kept clear of the Slough of Despond, the season of darkness, distress, and doubt, and been on the look out for “*the steps*” of promise. “When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”—Isaiah xliii. 2. “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”—John xiv. 18. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.”—Rev. iii. 10.

These are some of “*the steps*” of promise for

which Christian should have been looking. But the fact was, in his pleasant conversation, he every now and then almost forgot the burden on his back and scarcely felt it until he found it sinking him in the Slough of Despond. But, unlike Pliable, whose effort was to get out on that side which was nearest to his house, he struggled with all his might in the direction of the wicket-gate. In vain he put forth all his strength; the burden on his back was too much for him, and we have heard how the hand of *Help* plucked him out and put him upon firm ground. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—Ephes. ii. 8.

Let us see in Christian still the awakened sinner. He had made too much of his feelings, and for a time, perhaps too little of his burden. The Slough of Despond was his testing time, and he stood it. In spite of it he struggled hard for the wicket-gate. It is ever so with one awakened to a true sense of sin. Doubt and darkness may come upon him, he may dwell far more on God's threatenings than on His promises, the working of unbelief may rob him of comfort and consolation, but every effort will be Christward; and do you think such an one will be left to sink? Never. "God is a very present *Help* in trouble."—Psalm xli. 1. The God-man Saviour will not see him perish. "And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—Matt. xiv. 31.

And, as a parting lesson from the experiences of Christian, let us not, as young converts, indulge too rapturously in bright visions of the future, but rather guard against probable despondency of mind, and seek to have abiding confidence in the promises of God. Let us beware of falling into Peter's folly, who wanted to build tabernacles on the Mount of Glory. Christ had a little before predicted His sufferings and the sufferings of those who would dare to follow Him. But the ardent apostle would have the victory without fighting for it—the prize without running for it—the crown without the cross. We are all prone to act like him. We shall assuredly get into disappointment and distress if we look for heaven upon earth. Let advanced Christians learn this lesson, but especially let truly awakened sinners look out for "*the steps*" of promise, and, finding them, take care they make use of them, daily praying as they make their way to Christ—the wicket-gate—"Hold up my goings in thy paths that my footsteps slip not."—Psalm xvii. 5.

But another temptation was in store for Christian. It was testing times with him. Sorely was he tried.

2. **WORLDLY WISDOM.** Scarcely had Christian got clear of the Slough of Despond than he saw one crossing the field and coming towards him. They could not help meeting, for they crossed each other's path. This gentleman's name was *Mr. Worldly-Wiseman*, and he came from the town of *Carnal-Policy*, hard by the City of Destruction.

They were not strangers to each other, and, in

addition to living in adjacent towns, Christian's departure from his home had been greatly noised abroad, and become the town talk. Worldly-Wiseman inquired of Christian: "How now, good fellow, whither away after this burdened manner?"

Christian tells him he is on his way to the wicket-gate, where, he has been informed, he shall get rid of his burden. Mr. Worldly-Wiseman is a very shrewd man, according to his own way of thinking and, after a fashion, thoroughly religious. His desire is that Christian should enjoy the blessings of God, and he bids him get rid of his burden. Christian tells him how Evangelist had directed him, and Worldly-Wiseman, repudiating the counsel, bids him to be ruled by him and not give heed to a stranger. Poor Christian is all anxiety and attention. Worldly-Wiseman assures him of a plan of getting rid of his burden without any of the dangers of the way into which Evangelist had directed him—no need of the book in his hand—a remedy close by—and perfect certainty of "*Safety, friendship, and content.*"

"Pray, Sir," says Christian, "open this secret to me."

Here we must leave them. Time and space forbid us to go further. Let us however notice, we have each our *Testing Times*. God would prove us. Christian had to learn his lesson, we must learn ours. Are we burdened with the sense of sin? Our way is direct to Christ. Let us take care no Pliable seduces us into forgetfulness of our load, and no Worldly-Wiseman betrays us into a wrong path. Let us be faithful to Evangelist and true to the book

in our hand. Above all let us humble ourselves before God, conscious of weakness and infirmity. Testing times are times of special mercy. Let us learn to say :

“I did Thee wrong, my God,
I wronged Thy truth and love,
I fretted at the rod,
Against Thy power I strove.

I said, My God, at length,
This stony heart remove,
Deny all other strength,
But give me strength to love.

Come nearer, nearer still,
Let not thy light depart ;
Break, break this stubborn will,
Dissolve this iron heart.

Less wayward let me be,
More pliable and mild ;
In glad simplicity
More like a trustful child.

Less of the flesh each day,
Less of the world and sin ;
More of Thy Son, I pray,
More of Thyself within.

Leave nought that is unmeet,
Of all that is Thine own ;
Strip me ; and so complete
My training for the throne.”



FIFTH DAY.

THE WRONG ROAD.

What doest thou here, Elijah? "—1 KINGS xix 9.

THE incident with which these words stand connected happened in the days of Ahab, the wicked and idolatrous King of Israel. You will remember that grand occasion when Elijah gathered all Israel unto Mount Carmel and vindicated the honour of Jehovah to the discomfiture of the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal. You will recall the triumphant defeat of the idolatrous leaders of the blinded nation, and how Elijah slew them, as the Magistrate of God, by the brook Kidron. But how soon can the fine gold become dim. He who had been so valiant for the truth under circumstances of imminent peril—he who had dared to stand alone and administer a stern rebuke to a powerful king and an excited people—in a moment of temptation flies from the rage of Jezebel, Ahab's queen, and conceals himself for six weeks in a cave in Mount Horeb.

Elijah had been overcome by his fears. Instead of trusting in the counsel and strength of God, and leaving all the consequences of decided action to Him, he had let the golden opportunity pass by him, fled from his work, and in cowardly weakness,

moaned out under a juniper tree in the wilderness, "It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers."

In the cave of Mount Horeb the word of the Lord came unto him—"What doest thou here, *Elijah* ?"

The good man was out of the path of duty. He was on the wrong road. The question was a rebuke, but the voice was one entirely of love. God was still with his weak, but, withal, faithful servant. He was as much with him in Mount Horeb as on Mount Carmel. "Persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed."

And it is necessary, in connection with what I have now to say, to remind you, my reader, that Horeb, the place to which *Elijah* fled, is so near Sinai, from which the Law was proclaimed, that it appears as an eminence of the same mountain. Sinai is on the east and Horeb on the west, and when the sun rises the latter is covered with the shadow of Sinai. It is frequently said that God gave the Law at Horeb, while in other places Sinai is named. Horeb and Sinai, therefore, may be regarded as parts of the same mountain.

Here, then, the prophet took refuge from the rage of Jezebel, and the word of the Lord came unto him, "*What doest thou here, Elijah* ?" This brings us once more to Christian, who we left listening to the very plausible counsel of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman. The promise held out to him was a speedy and easy release from his burden. There was to be no need of the Book in his hand—none of the dangers of the

course he was then pursuing ; the remedy was close by, and to be had without any difficulty ; and the certain issue was to be “ safety, friendship, and content.”

We parted with Christian saying to his crafty adviser, “ Pray sir, open this secret to me ? ” Here is what follows : “ Why, in yonder village (the village is named Morality) there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine from their shoulders ; yea to my knowledge, he has done a great deal of good this way : aye, and besides, he hath skill to cure those that are somewhat crazed in their wits with their burden. To him, as I said, thou mayst go and be helped presently. His house is not quite a mile from this place ; and if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old gentleman himself. There, I say, thou mayst be eased of thy burden ; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as indeed I would not wish thee, thou mayst send for thy wife and children to thee to his village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which thou mayst have at a reasonable rate. Provision is there also cheap and good : and that which will make thy life more happy is, to be sure that thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion.”

Christian was brought to a stand by all this. At last he came to this conclusion, “ If this be true which this gentleman hath said, my wisest course is

to take his advice." He therefore asked, "Sir, which is the way to this honest man's house?" Worldly-Wiseman answered: "do you see yonder high hill?" Christian said "Yes, very well." "By that hill," replied the other, "you must go, and the first house you come to is his."

"So," writes the Dreamer, "Christian *turned out of his way* to go to Mr. Legality's house for help."

As Christian approached the hill he observed it was so high, and hung so much over the wayside, that he was afraid to pass it. He stood still, and in his terror knew not what to do. At the same time his burden became heavier, and flashes of fire burst from the hill. He trembled for fear. Now he began to regret that he had taken Worldly-Wiseman's advice, and, in his perplexity, he saw Evangelist coming to meet him. Christian began to blush for shame as his old friend and faithful guide "drew nearer and nearer."

Evangelist looked upon him with a severe and dreadful countenance, and put to him the question which the Lord put to Elijah when he had run from the post of duty to the cave of Horeb or Sinai, "*What doest thou here, Christian?*" Then follows the interesting conversation which we shall notice presently, which issues in Christian regaining the right path and resuming his journey to the wicket-gate. What remarks I have to make upon all this may profitably be arranged under these three heads:—

1. BAD ADVICE.
2. SINFUL COMPLIANCE.
3. SEASONABLE HELP.

1. **BAD ADVICE.**—Evangelist had said to Christian, “Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto; so shalt thou see the gate, at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.” He was to stay for nothing, but, burdened as he was, make his way to the wicket-gate. This was Evangelist’s advice. The advice of Worldly-Wiseman was exactly the reverse. He directed him to the village of Morality, to the house of Legality, and his son Civility. He had spoken contemptuously of the Book in his hand and ridiculed the burden on his back. He had, moreover, advised him to settle in the town of Morality, and encouraged him to do so with the assurance of cheap and good provisions, reasonable rent, and the company of honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion. Mr. Worldly-Wiseman’s was bad advice. Well might Christian be at a stand. He could not shake off the counsel of Evangelist, but the cheap and easy way of getting rid of his burden was a temptation stronger than he could withstand.

How often have the so-called wise of this world tempted the awakened sinner from the path which God’s Word has sanctioned and God’s minister pointed out! Many a time has such been seduced by subtle and crafty worldlings to turn off from the strait and narrow way, and he has found his burden of sin not lighter but a thousand times heavier, and, terrified by the lightnings of Sinai—“the curse of the law”—he has cried out, “Woe is me, for I am undone.”

Worldly-Wiseman’s advice amounted to this—Salvation made easy; or every Man his own Saviour.

Awakened sinner, be on your guard against such counsel. There is no ease for you in the *town of Morality*. *Legality* and *Civility*, with all their pretended skill, have no power to rid you of your burden of sin. All advice is bad that is in opposition to the Book in your hand—all advisers are “aliens and cheats,” who contradict the faithful minister who abides by “the law and the testimony.” Rest assured, God’s way is always the safest—God’s remedy always the best. The world is full of man-made Gospels, but no awakened sinner ever lost his burden by embracing one of them. Be suspicious of any advice that makes light of sin, that leads you to think less of the supreme authority of God’s Word, that tempts you to regard good works as meritorious in the smallest degree, and that disposes you to choose for your friends those with whom morality is sufficient and who fall in with the fashion of the world which passeth away. All such advice is from the father of lies. The Book in your hand declares, “Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat,” and the Christian poet, versifying the same great truth, sweetly writes—

“Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there ;
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveller.”

In Christian’s fall we see secondly—

2.—SINFUL COMPLIANCE.—Christian “turned out of his way to go to Mr. Legality’s house,” and, as he approached the over-hanging hill, which looked

as if it would fall upon his head, his burden seemed heavier, and as the flashes of fire came out of the hill, he quaked for fear. Thus by sinful compliance with a direction which, plausible as it was, had falsehood written upon it, Christian got upon the wrong road. He was on the way no longer to the wicket-gate, but to the village of Morality and the house of Legality.

Thus has it been with many an awakened sinner. He has felt his burden, but he has tried to get rid of it by outward reformation—by morality of life. He has hoped to be saved by his own doings, and has gone about to establish a righteousness of his own. He has lived in the village of Morality, he has made a friend of Mr. Legality, but the burden has become heavier, and beneath the brow of Sinai he has sunk under his load with the cry, “Woe is me, for I am undone.”

My dear reader, the world’s great effort is to tempt awakened sinners to take up their abode in the village of Morality. Outward correctness of life is sufficient. Pay your way—deal fairly with your neighbours—subscribe freely in the cause of charity—be kind, generous, and just—no more is required. The burden of sin is a phantom of the imagination—the need of spirituality of mind and holiness of life is the dream of enthusiasm. Do justly, love mercy, act fairly, give generously, and there need be no fear of death and no doubt of heaven. This is to live in the village of Morality, and make Mr. Legality your spiritual adviser. The inhabitants of this village, the Pharisees, have no difficulty in getting on. Houses are low-rented, and provisions are cheap. No

burdens distress them ; multitudes of “ honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion ”—the elite of society—surround them, and are proud of their acquaintance.

And many an awakened sinner—like Christian—has wandered into this village. But has he there parted with his burden? No! Has he relied upon his fancied obedience to the requirements of God's law? Has he striven to establish his own righteousness? Alas, how miserably he has failed! His burden has become heavier. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” “Sin by the commandment is shown to be exceeding sinful.” The further he has gone the deeper has his misery become, until, renouncing all idea of salvation by works, he has seen his complete justification in Christ, and has learned the meaning of the apostle's words, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” It was so with Luther, who did his best to buy a place in heaven. “If ever monk,” said he, “could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it.” It was so with Bunyan, who for no little time rested in outward reformation, contentedly ignorant of all spiritual Christianity. It was so with Whitfield, who was the poor slave of superstition long before he became the heroic soldier of the Cross. It was so with Fletcher of Madeley, who was brought by divine grace to the confession, “I have wandered from God instead of going straight to Christ; I have wasted my time in fighting against sin by the dim light of my reason and the mere use of means of grace, as if the means

would do me good without the blessing and power of God." It was so with John Newton, who for a length of time tried to stand in his own strength, and saw nothing of the fulness of Christ's atonement until he thoroughly felt his own helplessness and want.

It has been so with thousands. They have been awakened to a sense of sin, but for years they have wandered with their burden on the wrong road. Instead of going direct to Christ, they have turned from Him, only to feel their burden heavier and their misery deeper than ever. The lightnings have flashed from the hill. The thunders of the Law have hurled forth nothing but threatening and condemnation. There has been no refuge—no safety—no peace; and there could not be, until they have learned to say, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," and, regaining the only right and true road, they have sung—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come."

And, lastly, in connexion with Christian's fall, we see—

3. SEASONABLE HELP.—Just at the moment of his terror, as the flashes of fire came out of the hill, and he was afraid he should be burned, Evangelist drew near to him with the stern and searching question, "*What doest thou here, Christian?*" Christian was speechless. He was filled with shame. Evangelist proceeded, "Art not thou the man I

found crying without the walls of the City of Destruction?" Christian could only stammer out, "Yes, dear sir, I am the man." The conversation is too long to transcribe and quote, but I beg you will read it at your leisure. Christian tells Evangelist all about his conversation with Mr. Worldly-Wiseman—how that crafty counsellor had seduced him from the right road—and of the consequent miseries which had come upon him. The wound must be opened afresh before it can be healed. Evangelist rebukes trembling Christian with the words of that Book he had neglected, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."—Heb. xii. 25. "Now, the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him,"—Heb. x. 38.

Christian fell down as dead, crying "Woe is me, for I am undone." Then Evangelist caught him by the right hand, saying, "All manner of sin and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men."—Mat. xii. 31. "Be not faithless, but believing,"—John xx. 27.

"*The Faithful Guide*" then gave Christian more precious counsel based upon his recent fall. He showed him how his wicked seducer had nearly accomplished his destruction, dwelling upon the three things in the man's counsel he must utterly abhor. "First, his turning thee out of the way; secondly, his labouring to render the Cross odious to

thee; thirdly, his setting thy feet in that way that leadeth unto the administration of death."

He showed him how impossible it was for him to have been made free or get ease by *Legality*. "the son of the bondwoman which now is, and is in bondage with her children."—Gal. iv. 21-27. He assured him that no man was ever rid of his burden by him, and that Mr. Worldly-Wiseman was an alien, Mr. Legality a cheat, and Civility, with all his simpering looks, a hypocrite. Words and fire out of the mountain confirmed all this, and poor Christian, looking for nothing but death, cried in bitter anguish—

"Sir, what think you? Is there hope? May I now go back and go up to the wicket-gate? Shall I not be abandoned for this, and sent back from thence ashamed? I am sorry I have hearkened to this man's counsel. But may my sin be forgiven?"

Evangelist assured him great as his sin had been the man at the gate would receive him, "for he has goodwill for men," adding, "take heed that thou turn not aside again, 'lest thou perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.'"—Ps. ii. 12.

"Then," writes the Dreamer, "did Christian address himself to go back; and Evangelist, after he had kissed him, gave him one smile, and bid him God-speed."

A word about this seasonable help. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Just when Christian was in despair, "*the Faithful Guide*" appeared. And nothing can surpass the fidelity, wisdom, and gentleness of Evangelist in his admonitions. He

was stern, but he was kind. He laid open the wound, but it was that he might heal it. He unfolded the law, but it was that he might proclaim it a school-master to bring men to Christ and display the Gospel.

Evangelist was the type of a true minister. Sometimes he must rebuke, but, if he must do so, it is only that he may lead the penitent to his Saviour. He deals with the law, but only that he may point to the Redeemer, who has, on behalf of his people obeyed it. He is a true Son of Consolation. His frowns soon melt away into smiles, and, with accents of encouragement, he bids the weakest of pilgrims take heart again, and, rising from the dust, go forth, fearing no repulse, to the wicket-gate—the warm embrace of a loving and expectant Saviour.

And, awakened sinner, do not suffer yourself to be tempted away from the only road that leads to peace, and joy, and heaven. Go to Christ with your burden. Learn that you can be saved by nothing you can do, but entirely by what Christ has done for you. Avoid the path that leads to Mount Sinai—keep on the road that will bring you to Calvary.

And fear not. If Satan does get the advantage of you, never shall you be forsaken. Remember, when Christian's fear was at its height, Evangelist was at his side. "Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—Phil. i. 6.

"Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfil the Law's demands ;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling ;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace ;
Foul, I to the fountain fly ;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne—
Rock of Ages ! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.



SIXTH DAY.

THE WICKET-GATE.

“ Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

MATT. vii. 7.

WE have now to see the sinner, sought out and sustained by divine grace, reaching the feet of the Saviour. In the hero of Bunyan's immortal allegory we have seen the awakening of a soul to a sense of guilt, the temptations which arise from the surrounding world, the lessons which have to be learned in the schools of despondency and doubt, the impossibility of the Law yielding either refuge, peace, or safety, and the loving-kindness of God in His dealings with His weak and erring people. All this appears in the story of Christian setting out from the City of Destruction—the account of Obstinate, Pliable, and Worldly-Wiseman—the Slough of Despond—Mount Sinai—and the timely help of Evangelist. We left Christian addressing himself to return to the road which, through the subtlety of Worldly-Wiseman, he had forsaken. Once more he must get on to the path which leads to the wicket-gate.

Let us see in this picture the awakened sinner on his way to Christ. Burdened with a sense of guilt—borne down with his load of sin—he is determined to reach the only place where he can find peace of conscience, pardon of transgression, acceptance with God, and eternal rest.

Let us return to our story. The Dreamer writes: "So Christian went on with haste, neither spake he to any man by the way; nor if any man asked him would he vouchsafe him an answer, He went like one that was all the while treading on forbidden ground, and could by no means think himself safe till again he was got into the way which he left to follow Mr. Worldly-Wiseman's counsel; so in process of time Christian got up to the gate. Now over the gate there was written, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He knocked, therefore, more than once or twice, saying,

"May I now enter here? will he within
Open to sorry me, though I have been
An undeserving rebel? then shall I
Not fail to sing his lasting praise on high."

In this most simple and suggestive narrative we see Christian's anxiety to regain the forsaken path. Earnestness gave speed to his movements—he "*went on with haste.*"

So intent was he on his work that he had not time to speak to any one he met—to salute any by the way.

He felt himself on forbidden ground, and that no safety could be found on it. He dared not stay a moment, and rested not until he stood before the

gate and read with joy its inscription : “ *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*” He knocked—and many times—“*more than once or twice.*” He knocked with the earnestness of a man who must and would gain entrance. His hand trembled with fear, but it could not relax its hold. Like Peter at the house of Mary, he “continued knocking” with the vigour of one conscious of his danger and intensely anxious to be saved.

“I can but perish if I go,
But I’m resolved to try,
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.”

“At last there came a grave person to the gate, named Goodwill, who asked who was there? and whence he came? and what he would have?”

To these questions Christian answered, “Here is a poor burdened sinner; I come from the City of Destruction, but I am going to Mount Zion that I may be delivered from the wrath to come. I would, therefore, Sir, since I am informed that by this gate is the way thither, know if you are willing to let me in.”

Goodwill replied, “I am willing, with all my heart; and with that he opened the gate.”

There are points in this conversation which must be carefully noticed. We must observe the *character* in which Christian stood before the gate—a *poor burdened sinner*. He was a contrast to proud Naaman, who “came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.” He was more like that miserable leper who

met Jesus as he came down from the mountain, and raised the piteous cry, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" or like the disciples on the tempest-tossed lake, who awoke the sleeping Saviour with the prayer, "Lord save us, we perish." We must observe, too, *the position* of this pilgrim at the gate. He had his back to the world and his face heavenward. "*I come from the City of Destruction, but I am going to Mount Zion.*" And, finally, his *purpose was clear and his resolution fixed*. What he wanted was deliverance from the wrath to come, and, with an importunity which no delay could exhaust, he knocked again and again at the wicket-gate.

One more interesting feature may be noticed.

There was not a moment's hesitation in the reply—not another question followed. The character, position, and appeal were sufficient. "I am willing, with all my heart," said Goodwill, "and with that he opened the door."

The picture presented to us here is the awakened sinner at the feet of his Saviour. With the licence which must always be acceded to parables *Goodwill* and *the wicket-gate* both represent the Lord Jesus, he who has "Goodwill" for the vilest and worst, and is the one "way" to the rest and happiness of heaven—He whose birthday song was "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, *goodwill* towards men;" and who declared with His own loving lips "I am *the way*, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

Let us read what follows in our story.

“ So when Christian was stepping in, the other gave him a pull. Then said Christian, what means that? The other told him, a little distance from this gate there is erected a strong castle, of which Beelzebub is the captain; from thence both he and they that are with him shoot across at them that come up to this gate, if haply they may die before they enter in. Then, said Christian, I rejoice and tremble.”

In this we have a lively representation of that great enemy of souls, who “like a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.” The great purpose of Satan is to prevent sinners going to Christ. Many an arrow he lets fly at the poor pilgrims hurrying to the wicket-gate—the arrow of terrifying thoughts, or temptations to sin, or the attractiveness of the world, or doubt of God’s willingness to pardon, or the impossibility of being saved. Thousands have been well nigh diverted by these assaults, sadly wounded, but a pull from the unseen hand has snatched them from their peril, and they have lived to sing—

“There is a safe and secret place ,
Beneath the wings divine,
Reserved for all the heirs of grace—
That refuge now is mine.

The least and feeblest here may hide
Uninjured and unawed ;
While thousands fall on every side,
I rest secure in God.”

Let us, then, in this picture see two things for our instruction :—

1. THE SINNER'S NEED OF DETERMINATION AND FAITH.

2. THE SAVIOUR'S SURE PROTECTION AND WELCOME.

1. THE SINNER'S NEED OF DETERMINATION AND FAITH.

Burdened with a sense of sin we must go direct to Christ. The only path to heaven is the path of holiness through a crucified Redeemer ; and in this work we must allow nothing to delay us. We must speak to no man by the way. We must remember the case of the Scribe who offered to follow our Lord, and was directed to count the cost of Christian discipleship. We must think of that other follower who asked for permission first to bury his father, and received the solemn answer, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." There are times when a Christian has to give up the nearest and dearest ties, and, leaving duties which are purely worldly to others, preach Christ's Gospel and do Christ's work at the sacrifice of ease and at the risk of life itself. And not only must the burdened sinner suffer nothing to delay him making his way to Christ, but he must regard every path but that of holiness as "*forbidden ground*." There must be a holy determination to reach Christ, and a solemn conviction that in Him and Him alone is the place of safety. Convinced of sin, assured of the perils of the unconverted state, the awakened sinner must seek Christ, the wicket-gate, and rest not a moment until his eyes can read the glorious inscription—"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Awakened sinner, aroused to a sense of guilt but not yet free from the burden it lays upon you, are you, like Christian, hurrying to Christ? Let me warn you to guard against all temptations, either to turn back or to draw aside. Listen to no Worldly-Wiseman on the road. Ask no question; return no answer. Press on, regardless of the sneers of some and the ridicule of others. Resolve, in the strength of that Holy Spirit who first called you from the world and set your face heavenward, to enter in at the strait gate at any sacrifice, to join the little flock of Christ whatever it may cost you, and gain the feet of that Saviour where alone can be found free pardon of sin, the peace which passeth all understanding, and the fulness of forgiving love.

But Christian knocked at the gate, and he continued knocking until it was opened. He read the inscription, and believed it. And his knocking was accompanied with a confession of guilt and prayer for entrance.

Thus must it be with every burdened sinner. Christ said, "I am the door," and "*Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*" We must resolve, in dependence upon God, to go to the Saviour, and we must exercise the faith of a child in Him—casting ourselves on Him just as we are—be willing to knock and knock again, waiting for an answer, and expecting all we ask, in the spirit of holy Jacob, who said to the angel, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."—Gen. xxxii. 26.

May we all have this determination and this faith. What we want is the deep conviction that we are

burdened sinners—the earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come—a true anxiety to share that mercy which is alone to be found in Christ—and a firm resolve, by God's help, to tread that narrow way and enter that strait gate which shall conduct us to the bliss of heaven.

And in the picture submitted to us by Bunyan for our instruction we have—

2. THE SAVIOUR'S SURE PROTECTION AND WELCOME.

How sweet was the answer which Goodwill returned to the "burdened sinner" at the gate. "*I am willing, with all my heart.*" What a cordial welcome was this for the weary pilgrim. How such words would fill him with confidence and make him forget the past. My reader, see in this Christ's willingness to receive the burdened sinner. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 28. "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37. Not one word of inquiry which would have recalled the past to memory fell from the lips of Goodwill. The burdened sinner from the City of Destruction asks admission at the gate and it was enough. "*I am willing, with all my heart*" was the welcome he received.

The willingness of Christ to take the burdened sinner to His sympathy and love can admit of no dispute. Millions have gone to Him and not one has ever been repulsed. The vilest and the worst have in His blood been washed whiter than the

driven snow. Oh, Jesus is willing—infinately willing—and, but for the hardened and unbelieving heart which refuses to listen to the invitation of unequalled goodness, all the world might be saved. Can you—can I—bear testimony to the infinite willingness of Christ to bless and enrich the sinner?

“I am coming to a King,
Large petitions I will bring ;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much.”

But the burdened sinner going to Christ requires not only a welcome at the end, he needs protection by the way. The castle of Satan and his infernal archers are not far from the wicket-gate. But for the constant protection—the sustaining grace of Christ—the *hand which pulls us in*—we should never reach the fulness of the blessings which are secured to us in His Gospel.

Satan, the great adversary, would be too much for us, and wounded and stricken we should perish on the road. And observe, these deadly arrows are hurled at us at the very gate. Ah, how many of us have had reason to know the truth of this picture. The very moment of our casting ourselves on Christ has been the moment of the fiercest attack on the part of our great enemy. Thoughts have flashed into our minds which have filled us with horror, and we have come bewildered out of temptations with the consciousness that a miracle has saved us.

These have been the arrows from the castle of Beelzebub. “What, then, shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Sovereign grace can alone solve the mystery.

“Midst all our sin and care and woe,
His Spirit would not let us go.”

Well might Christian say when he had got through the gate, conscious of the danger he had escaped, and the merciful help he had received, “I rejoice and tremble.”

Then follows the interesting conversation between Goodwill and Christian. The weary but encouraged pilgrim rejoiced over the dangers he had passed through on hearing the good news of the open door before him which no man could shut. Goodwill, true to his name, asked him, “But how is it you came alone?” Christian told him that none of his neighbours saw their danger as he saw his. How thoroughly scriptural is this. The unconverted state is a state of insensibility to danger. The reason men do not fly to Christ is because they do not feel that they are perishing, and because they have no sense of needing Him. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.”—1 Cor. ii. 14.

Christian told Goodwill how his wife and children called after him, and his neighbours stood crying and begging him to return, and how he had put his fingers into his ears and gone on his way.

He went over the several events of his journey—the story of Obstinate and Pliable and the Slough of Despond. On hearing of Pliable's conduct, Goodwill said, “Alas, poor man! is the celestial glory of so small esteem with him that he counteth

it not worth running the hazard of a few difficulties to obtain it?"

Then in Christian there is a sweet exhibition of humility. Lest Goodwill should suppose that he deserved praise for having come forward to the gate instead of going back to the city, he replied, "Truly I have said the truth of Pliable; and if I should also say the truth of myself it will appear there is no betterment betwixt him and myself. It is true he went back to his house, but I also turned aside to go in the way of death, being persuaded thereto by the carnal arguments of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman." Goodwill asks further about Legality and Worldly-Wiseman, and congratulated Christian on his escape from the mountain. And sweetly did the rejoicing Pilgrim confess his obligation to Evangelist, adding, "but it was God's mercy that he came to me again, for else I had never come hither. But now I am come, such an one as I am, more fit for death by that mountain, than thus to stand talking with my Lord. But, oh! what a favour is this to me, that yet I am admitted entrance here!"

To this Goodwill replied, "We make no objections against any, notwithstanding all they have done before they come hither 'they in no wise are cast out,' and therefore, good Christian, come a little way with me, and I will teach thee about the way thou must go. Look before thee; dost thou see this narrow way? This is the way thou must go. It was cast up by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ and His apostles, and it is as straight as a rule can make it. This is the way thou must go."

•

Christian asked if there were no turnings or windings, and Goodwill told him there were, but they were all crooked and wide—the right road was straight and narrow.

Christian then begged to be released from his burden, but Goodwill told him he must be willing to bear it until he came to the place of deliverance, adding, “for there it will fall from thy back itself.”

Then Christian prepared for his journey. Goodwill directed him to the House of the Interpreter, and, taking leave of each other, they parted.

How exquisitely simple, natural, and scriptural is all this. The narrow way is that which has been made by Christ and trodden by patriarchs, prophets apostles—the good and the great in all ages. We do not always lose the burden of sin directly we go to Christ. We part with our love of it—its dominion over us is at an end—but we do not get rid of the terrible consciousness of guilt until we get to the place of deliverance.

For this we must wait—for this we must pray. If we have found Christ this is not far off.

True conviction must lead to conversion, and true conversion must issue in salvation. I doubt not Bunyan trusted in Christ before that joyous hour arrived, when “he longed to tell of God’s mercies, to him, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands.”

Thousands have found Christ, and yet had to wait for the assurance of pardon and justifying grace.

It was probably so with Bunyan—it was clearly

so with Christian—and it may be so with some among ourselves. Let us rejoice if no longer we cherish the love of sin, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. i. 6.

Keep me, O keep me, Lord of all,
Preserve my footsteps ever ;
Mine to obey and Thine to call,
Oh ! leave me, leave me never.
Whate’er I want is all in Thee,
Whate’er I ask in faith, shall be—
Thou Sovereign Gracious Giver.

The flowers that wear their heaven-wrought dress,
The sun above me shining,
Would fill my heart with cheerfulness,
Alas ! so oft repining.
And every leaf, and fruit, and tree,
Would tell of love that dwells with Thee,
In mercy all designing.

O’erlook my sins for Jesu’s sake,
And every fault and failing ;
O Lord, the power of Satan break,
My poor weak heart assailing :
In sore temptation stand by me,
That I may “more than conqueror” be,
And, through Thy grace, prevailing.



SEVENTH DAY.

THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE.

“He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you.”—JOHN xvi. 14.

IN these words our Lord Jesus Christ unfolds to us the office of the Holy Spirit. The relationship existing between Himself and the Third Person in the Trinity has heights and depths in it the wisest among us cannot pretend to reach, but we know thus much—the Holy Spirit receives His instructions from Christ, is His ambassador to this fallen world of ours, and has for His distinctive purpose the doing of Christ's will and the carrying on of His redemptive work. *“He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you.”*

In Christian, through the wicket-gate, we saw the sinner in the exercise of a true faith in the Saviour. He has parted with his love of sin—has ceased to be its votary and slave; but he has not lost his consciousness of guilt and the terrible sense of divine displeasure. His burden is still upon his back. In the direction of Goodwill—namely, *the house of the Interpreter*, we see the next step in the spiritual journey, the seeking of enlightenment,

instruction, and blessing at the hands of the great Revealer of God's love and purpose—the Holy Spirit. The sinner has found his way to Christ. Ruined and undone he has cast himself upon the strong for strength. But how much has he to learn in the school of experience: what revelations of God—His character, His will, His purpose, His love: what revelations of Christ—His infinite tenderness, compassion, and goodness: what revelations of Divine Truth as contained in the Scriptures, and unfolded only to those who seek for them as for hidden treasure. Whose office is it thus to carry on the great work of Christ in relation to the souls of men? It is the office of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the ever blessed Trinity. He whose work it is in the wonderful scheme of Redemption to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us.

Let me say, in passing, that it is supremely important we should hold clear views concerning the work of the Holy Spirit. Multitudes of professing Christians are sadly unmindful of the nature of His work and the absolute necessity for His presence in the Church. They feel something of the need of Christ's work *for* us, but know little of the need of the Holy Spirit's work *in* us. They understand, somewhat how it is we acquire a title to heaven by Christ's blood, but have very imperfect views respecting that fitness for heaven which we can alone get through Christ's Spirit.

Bunyan, taught by divine grace, like John the Baptist, gave prominence to the work of the Third Person in the Trinity. Hence it is he sends

Christian from Goodwill and the wicket-gate at once to the house of the Interpreter. In other words, the sinner having found Christ submits to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, He, of whom the Divine Saviour said in our text, "*He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*"

This brings us once more to our interesting story.

"Then he went on till he came to the house of the Interpreter.

We shall look at what follows under three heads:—

1. WHAT CHRISTIAN DID.
2. WHAT CHRISTIAN SAID.
3. WHAT CHRISTIAN SAW.

1. WHAT CHRISTIAN DID.—The Dreamer tells us *he knocked over and over*. In this we have a beautiful picture of the spiritually anxious—one who is really desirous of knowing and doing the Lord's will. We see earnestness, and more than earnestness—importunity; the spirit which asks, and asks again, mindful of the loving assurance, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."—Luke xi. 13.

The lesson conveyed by this action of knocking *over and over* is a very weighty and important one, and the promise contained in the passage I have quoted ought never to be forgotten. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God, and, beyond all doubt, His greatest gift, for by Him we have possession of our Father's

boundless love, our Divine Saviour's atoning blood, and all else necessary to secure for us present peace and future glory.

But we have to *ask, seek, knock*.—In other words, we have to pray for the Spirit—to stand knocking at the door of the Interpreter's house. My reader, it is not enough for us to say, “I have gone to Christ.” Do we pray for the Spirit? Do we continue praying for His Divine teaching until we feel His light in our minds and His strength in our souls? Let us think of Christian knocking *over and over* at the house of the Interpreter. As young converts, do we feel our need of further instruction? Are we painfully conscious of our ignorance and anxiously asking for wisdom? Do we know our weakness, and are we determined to give God no rest until we get strength? This is the disposition which leads on to spiritual promotion. It has been thus that eminent saints have done great things. They have stood at the door of the Interpreter's house, crying,—

“Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,
Let us Thine influence prove;
Source of the old prophetic fire,
Fountain of light and love.”

“At last one came to the door, and asked who was there?” Sooner or later our answer shall come. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” There may be delay, but there shall be no refusal. Many an anxious soul has *knocked over and over*, but not one ever knocked in vain. My reader, let us get comfort from this fact. Perhaps you are knocking at the house of the

Interpreter—seeking the teaching, guidance, and blessing of the Spirit—let me bid you persevere, “nothing wavering.” “This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”—1 John v. 14.

It was so with Christian. “At last one came to the door, and asked who was there.”

2. WHAT CHRISTIAN SAID.—“Sir, here is a traveller who was bid by an acquaintance of the goodman of the house to call here for my profit: I would therefore speak with the master of the house. So he called for the master of the house; who after a little time came to Christian, and asked him what he would have. Sir, said Christian, I am a man that am come from the City of Destruction, and am going to the Mount Zion; and I was told by the man that stands at the gate at the head of this way, that if I called here you would show me excellent things, such as would be a help to me in my journey.”

Let us notice here the fact of Christian never losing his character. He is still the man come from the City of Destruction on his way to Mount Zion. He tells the same tale as he told at the wicket-gate. And we must not fail to observe the special request he made. He said, “I would therefore speak to *the Master of the House.*”

Surely we may see in this a reproof for all those who submit unreservedly to the teaching of the Servant—those who drink of the muddy waters of Tradition—the blind votaries of a system which

makes the Church the Interpreter of Holy Scripture, demanding, not the intelligent consent of the Christian, but the blind acquiescence of the slave. The right of every man to apply for the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit is one of the foundation stones of Protestantism. It was to maintain this right, and secure the power to exercise it, that our Reformers fought the battle of the Reformation. Why are we to submit blindly to Fathers who are unanimous on no subject whatever? Why are we to be governed by councils which have made the grossest mistakes and have never learned to agree among themselves? No—we will interpret, not the Scripture by the Church, but the Church by the Scripture.—Art. 20. We will remember universities can make scholars, but the grace of God alone can make Christians. We will pass by gifted scribes and learned doctors of the law, and say with Christian—"I would therefore speak with the master of the house." "For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."—Ps. xviii. 28. We will rest satisfied with nothing but the teaching of the Spirit.

Thus in Christian at the house of the Interpreter we have a vivid picture of a sinner, consciously in Christ, but seeking light of the Church's divinely appointed teacher, the Holy Ghost. We see in it direct application of the soul to the fountain-head of all true knowledge and instruction. We see, too, the temper and spirit with which this help must be sought—that of a burdened sinner—one from the City of Destruction on his way to Mount Zion—and

the readiness of our Heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

“Then said the Interpreter, Come in; and I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee.”

3. WHAT CHRISTIAN SAW.—He had, as it were, said, “open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,” and the Interpreter “commanded his man to light the candle, and bid Christian follow him.”

Then we are told, “So he had him into a private room and bid his man open a door, the which when he had done, Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hang up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it: It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind his back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head.”

In this and what follows we have a series of revelations made by the Spirit of God to the burdened Pilgrim on his way to Zion. Let us attentively consider it, and let me say the deeper and more prayerful our meditation, the more wonderful will these “Chambers of Imagery” appear.

The Interpreter *commanded his man to light the candle*. In this we must see the Holy Spirit employing human instrumentality in the bestowment of light on the dark chambers of the soul. Every truly enlightened minister is represented by the man who lighted the candle. Concerning such our Lord said, “Ye are the light of the world. A city set on an hill cannot be hid.”—Matt. v. 14.

Until the candle is lighted in the heart it remains in darkness. Hence the nature of real conversion as described by St. Paul, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light."—Ephes. v. 8.

Thus, then, let us see that while the faithful minister of the Gospel may be the distributor of the light, the one source of it is the Holy Spirit. The man lighted the candle, but he did so by the Interpreter's command—"Let there be light, and there was light."—Gen. i. 3.

But Christian must go into the *private room*. We may employ human instruments—on many an uninspired page we may read the truth and from many uninspired lips hear it—but it must be in *the private room*—alone with the Spirit—that we must have the truth written upon our hearts and made influential for good in our daily lives. Here, in calm communion with the Spirit of God, we learn the things of Christ—here we enjoy revelations which lift us above all human instructors—here we gather up the richest jewels of Christian experience, and go on our way rejoicing. We must be alone in the private room with the Interpreter for this sweet intercourse of the soul with the Holy Spirit.

Now let us examine *the Picture* which Christian saw. It was the portrait of a man, and there were certain things about it which were intended to furnish a great lesson to the burdened Pilgrim. "Now, said the Interpreter, I have showed thee this picture first, because the man whose picture this is, is the only man whom the Lord of the place whither

thou art going hath authorised to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayst meet with in the way ; wherefore take good heed to what I have showed thee and bear well in thy mind what thou hast seen ; lest in thy journey thou meet with some that pretend to lead thee right, but their way goes down to death."

The man presented in the Picture was the Minister of Christ—one who should be Christian's guide. He bore the marks of the genuine apostolical succession, as beautiful as they were scriptural and true.

He was "*a very grave person.*" He was no trifler—no waster of his Master's time in the hunting-field or at the county ball. The true minister of Christ is ever solemnised with the responsibilities of his high and honourable office. He feels it to be no light matter to deal with immortal souls. He has no heart for levity while the perishing are all around him. With eternity in view he dare not be light and trifling—with death busy on every hand he dare not be frivolous and vain. "The deacons must be grave."

He had "*eyes lifted up to heaven.*" Every true minister will be a prayerful one. He who cares more for the fleece than the flock will shut out God from his thoughts, but a ministry of power must be a ministry of prayer. Ministers preach, but the true work is really done upon their knees. We are not surprised to hear that Grimshaw was the instrument God used in the conversion of hundreds of souls when we learn that he prayed in secret four times a

day. What is wanted is, not more eloquence in the pulpit, but more prayer in the closet. May we not believe that people would heed more if ministers prayed more? The dust of earth must of necessity be about their sandals, but their eyes should ever be *lifted up to heaven*.

He has *the best of books in his hand*. What can this be but the Bible—the minister's chart, compass, and unerring guide? Truly is the precious Word of God "the best of books." Like Goliath's sword, "there is none like it." "Take thou authority to preach the Word," says the bishop to the newly ordained minister of the Church of England. The priests of Romanism may proclaim the traditions of men—Socinian teachers may revel in the mysticism of Germany—but an enlightened ministry will know nothing but the infallible Word of God. "Among all the other means, says Cecil, "which a minister has of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to the Word of God and prayer."

The law of truth was written upon his lips. A true ministry will appeal ever to the Law and to the Testimony. It will have no selfish purpose to carry out, but ever strive to exhibit, proclaim, and enforce the Scriptures of Truth. The question will be, not what this or that man has said, but what God has said. It will not ask so much "What has this Father written?" or "What has that council decided?" but rather with my revered friend, Dr. McCaul, inquire "What does the Bible say?" "To the law and to

the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”—Isaiah viii. 20.

The world was behind his back. A true minister will not be unmindful of the world, but he will keep it in the background. It will receive his attention, but it will not absorb his sympathy. He will be most watchful against its enticing pleasures—even guard against its lawful pursuits—and the two-fold work which will make all else comparatively valueless will be—personal growth in holiness and the salvation of immortal souls.

He stood as if he pleaded with men. See, the attitude of every enlightened minister of Christ. He reads no moral essay—he cares not to discuss the battles of theologians—he pleads with men in accents of pity for their lost condition, and gives them the invitation of love as the ambassador of Christ. “Why will ye die?” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” A pleading ministry is a powerful ministry. What is wanted is to be stirred with a real interest in souls. Whitfield’s words were well supported by his tears, and who shall say which had the most power with his hearers? What ministers need is the spirit of St. Paul—a deep, earnest, ever active sympathy for the perishing and the lost. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God.”—2 Cor. v. 20.

And a crown of gold did hang over his head. Here is the reward of the true minister. He has to

bear many a cross of disappointment by the way, but he has the crown of gold awaiting him in the end. Faithful to his office, true to his Master, he shall wear the crown of righteousness when the chief Shepherd shall appear. Wearied with unceasing toil, spent in a service which has brought him, amid its encouragements, not a little pain and sorrow—he looks forward to a recompense hereafter which shall make amends for all. The crown of gold is hung over his head. The eye of faith can see it—the hand of faith can touch it. He says, with good Bishop Weeks, “There is plenty of work now, but there will be plenty of rest by and by;” or, with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”—Col. iii. 4.

This was the first Revelation which the Holy Spirit, represented by the Interpreter, made to Christian, the burdened pilgrim, on his way to Zion. The picture set before him the kind of minister whom he should suffer to guide him. He was “one of a thousand.” In Bunyan’s day there were men in the ministerial office ungodly in their lives, erroneous in their teaching, and utterly unfit for their sacred calling. He would warn pilgrims to Zion against such men. Christian was to follow no such teachers, however profound their learning or exalted their position. The ministry which was to guide him was to be prayerful, and true to God’s word; it was to be unworldly in its character, and clear in its aim; it was to be constrained by the love of Christ, and absorbed by the love of souls.

What more Christian saw we must leave for the next day. Meanwhile, let me say, such a ministry is the great want of every age. May God give such to the Church of our choice and affection. Pray that men like John the Baptist and St. Paul may fill our pulpits, that free, from both Rationalism and Romanism, they may “know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Such shall not want either success here or “the crown of gold” hereafter. The sweet notes of the angels shall come in the breath of heaven, and amid the chimes of the celestial bells, they shall sing, “Come up hither!”

“Lord of the Church, we humbly pray
For those who guide us in Thy way,
And speak Thy holy Word;
With love divine their hearts inspire,
And touch their lips with hallowed fire,
And needful grace afford.

Help them to preach the truth of God,
Redemption through the Saviour's blood;
Nor let the Spirit cease
On all the Church His gifts to shower,
To them a messenger of power,
To us of life and peace.

So may they live to Thee alone,
Then hear the welcome word—“Well done.”
And take their crown above;
Enter into their Master's joy,
And all eternity employ,
In praise, and bliss, and love.”



EIGHTH DAY.

CHAMBERS OF IMAGERY.

“*Led of the spirit.*”—GAL. v. 18.

WE must keep in mind the spiritual meaning of the Interpreter's house. In this most beautiful portion of his allegory, Bunyan brings before us the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. He is the true Interpreter, and His office is to “teach us all things.” And as you read the account of what Christian saw in these “Chambers of Imagery,” you will observe that it is said at each scene, “*he took him by the hand.*” Can anything be more faithful to Scripture than this? Truly may we say that Bunyan's mind was saturated with the Word of God. “But if ye be *led of the Spirit* ye are not under the law,” writes St. Paul to the Galatians; and again to the Romans, “As many as are *led by the Spirit of God* they are the sons of God.” How beautifully do these few words express the tenderness and gentleness of the Spirit in leading a soul which has found Christ from truth to truth—from stage to stage in the spiritual journey—gradually completing and perfecting His work in it—and preparing it for the joy and crown of the last great

day. The Spirit does not drive—He leads. There is no noise about His operations. He is gentleness itself. He takes us by the hand. We now proceed to the scenes which Christian witnessed in the Interpreter's house, or, in other words, the revelations which the Holy Spirit graciously makes to those who are God's true and faithful people. The next scene presented to him was—

1. A PICTURE OF HIS OWN HEART.—Let us give it in Bunyan's words. "Then he took him by the hand and led him into a very large parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; the which, after he had reviewed a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now, when he began to sweep, the dust began so abundantly to fly about that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said the Interpreter to a damsel that stood by, bring hither the water and sprinkle the room; which, when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure." In this Christian would see his own heart—the trials through which it had passed, and the process to which it had been subjected. There had been a time when the parlour was quite undisturbed—when the dust laid quietly enough. The room had never been swept. He would call to mind the long years of false peace he had spent when not a thought of sin had troubled him, and no forebodings of judgment to come alarmed him. But, succeeding upon this had been a season of disturbance and agitation. "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound." Of this he would

be reminded by the man who began to sweep and the dust which almost choked him. Not until the besom of the law enters the dusty parlour of the heart is the hour of disquietude and distress. Then the dust is raised. The poor sinner is made sensible of the sin and guilt long hidden and undisturbed in the soul. He sees himself in the true light, and, convinced that no mere outward reformation will be enough, he cries out, "Create in me *a clean heart*, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Thus, then, the first sweeper was the law, and in all this we see the purpose of the law. It cannot cleanse. It can raise the dust but it cannot lay it. It can convince of sin, but it cannot remove it. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."—Rom. iii. 20. "For without the law sin was dead." Hence St. Paul says, "For I was alive without the law once;" that is, I enjoyed a certain sort of peace before the law in its spiritual meaning was applied to my soul; or, to keep in mind our allegory, the dust was quiet enough before the man, by the Interpreter's order, began to sweep; but the Apostle adds, "But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died;" that is, when the Spirit of God brought home all this to me, sin was seen in its true character, all my self-confidence was brought down and every hope I had was blasted and destroyed; or, as our story has it, "the dust began so abundantly to fly about that Christian had almost therewith been choked." Then a third lesson was afforded by this remarkable scene. The damsel sprinkled the room with water, and it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. "For what

the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Rom. viii., 3, 4. Thus, then, the second sweeper was the Gospel. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”—John i., 17. How beautifully scriptural and true to experience is all this. The Holy Spirit leads us to see our sins in the light of God’s perfect and holy law. We find ourselves under the frown of Sinai and feel that it will crush us. But the “sweet and precious influences” of the Gospel come to us—the dominion of sin is destroyed within us—our hearts, purified by faith, become “the temples of the Holy Ghost”—and the dusty parlour is swept and adorned for the Master’s use. In all this Christian would see a picture of his own heart.

The next scene presented to him was—

2. A PICTURE OF ALL MANKIND.—“The Interpreter took him by the hand and led him into a little room where sat two children, each one in his chair. The name of the eldest was Passion and the name of the other, Patience : Passion seemed to be much discontented, but Patience was very quiet.” The Interpreter explained Passion’s discontent. “The Governor of them would have him stay for his best things till the beginning of the next year ; but he will have them all now ; but Patience is willing to wait.” The Dreamer adds—“Then I saw

that one came to Passion and brought him a bag of treasure and poured it down at his feet: the which he took up and rejoiced therein, and withal laughed Patience to scorn. But I beheld him awhile, and he had lavished all away and had nothing left him but rags."

The Interpreter explained the scene, and no lesson could have been more important to Christian at this stage of his journey. Here was a picture of all mankind. The world is divided between Passion and Patience, those who want their good things now, and those who are willing to wait for theirs. Passion was the man of this world, whose motto is "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;" Patience is the man of that world which is to come—looking for his "good things" hereafter. Passion was the rich man, with his "bag of treasure," clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day;" Patience was poor Lazarus, wanting the crumbs, and waiting for rest in Abraham's bosom. In the end of Passion, Christian saw that "the things which are seen are temporal;" in the end of Patience, he saw that "the things which are not seen are eternal."

How greatly would all this encourage Christian. He would think of the City he had left behind him, of the worldly advantages he had surrendered, of the wealth, honour, and applause he had sacrificed, and the contempt and scorn he had incurred; but he would see that the choice he had made was a wise one. He would say "Let Passion spend his portion if he will, I am willing to wait for mine." Well

might he observe, when he saw this scene, "Then I perceive it is not best to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come."

My reader, this is one of those discoveries which the Holy Spirit makes to the hearts of God's people. They see the true character of earthly things and the fearful peril of worldliness. They are fully reconciled to any sacrifices they have to make or any losses they have to sustain. They do not expect their best things now. They feel this is sowing time and that reaping time must follow. Thus taught by the Spirit they learn to sing :

"O world, how little do thy joys
Concern a soul that knows
Itself not made for such low toys
As thy poor hand bestows !

Then take away thy tinsel wares,
That dazzle here our eyes ;
Let us go up above the stars,
Where all our treasure lies."

The next scene presented to Christian by the Interpreter was—

3. THE MYSTERY OF SUSTAINED GRACE.—The Dreamer tells us, "Then I saw in my dream that the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a place where was a fire burning against a wall and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it to quench it ; yet did the fire burn higher and hotter." The mystery was explained. On the other side of the wall was one "with a vessel of oil in his hand, of which he did also continually cast, but secretly, into the fire." In this Christian

had presented to him the mystery of sustained grace. The fire represented the work of grace in the heart. The one standing by, trying to quench it, was the devil. The man on the other side of the wall was Christ. In this he would see the source of all his strength. But for Christ, whose grace was sufficient for him, he would be an easy prey for the great adversary. And how much this scene would comfort him. He would feel nothing would be able to quench the flame of divine love. He would rejoice in seeing that far greater was he who was for him, than he who was against him. Satan would be powerless with such a plentiful supply of grace. This is another of those discoveries which the Holy Spirit makes to the soul. We see that He who kindled the flame in our hearts sustains it. We know that while Satan would quench our spiritual life there is "the man Christ Jesus," with the vessel of oil, who will support it. But for this we should sink down dispirited in the presence of our foes. Only the promise of sustaining grace nerves us to the fight. But, "I will be with thee!" is enough, and we sing—

" 'Twas grace that called our souls at first ;
By grace thus far we've come ;
And grace will help us through the worst,
And lead us safely home."

The next scene presented by the Interpreter to Christian was—

4. THE SECRET OF FINAL VICTORY.—It would be a shame to give you any other words than those of Bunyan. "I saw also the Interpreter took him

again by the hand and led him into a pleasant place where was builded a stately palace, beautiful to behold ; at the sight of which Christian was greatly delighted ; he saw also upon the top thereof certain persons walking who were clothed all in gold. He then led him toward the door of the palace : and behold at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table side with a book and his ink horn before him to take the name of him that should enter therein. He saw also, that in the doorway stood many men in armour to keep it, being resolved to do to the man that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in amaze ; at last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write saying, Set down my name, Sir ; the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put a helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force ; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely ; so, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out he cut his way through them all and pressed forward into the palace, at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were therein, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying

Come in, come in,
Eternal glory thou shalt win.

So he went in, and was clothed with such garments

as they. Then Christian smiled, and said, I think verily I know the meaning of this."

To have mutilated this description would have been to have spoiled it. There is scarcely anything more exquisite in the entire range of uninspired composition. Its meaning was, indeed, plain enough. Christian saw in it a commentary on our Lord's words, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The timid crowd about the doorway will never reach the top of the palace. The name down—all idea of rest or peace must be surrendered. Every inch of the way will have to be fought for. The armed men will have to be cut down one by one. But here is the secret of final triumph, and this is another of the great discoveries which the Holy Spirit makes to the soul. There is no gliding into Heaven. There is a stern battle between our present stand-point and the "eternal glory." "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold of eternal life." Shrinking from this we shall never be clothed in gold—never share the palace with the redeemed in glory. If we would reach heaven we must follow the man of the "stout countenance, who was determined to win at all hazards."

The next scene presented to Christian by the Interpreter was—

5. THE IMMENSE DANGER OF MERE PROFESSION.—Christian at this point would have departed, but the Interpreter said, "Nay, stay till I have shewed thee a little more, and after that then thou shalt go on thy way."

Then says the Dreamer, "So he took him by the hand again and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. Now the man to look on seemed very sad; he sat with his eyes looking down to the ground, his hands folded together, and he sighed as if he would break his heart." The conversation which followed showed this man to have been once a flourishing professor of religion. He had thought himself, and others had thought him, "fair for the celestial city"—now he is "a man of despair," and, shut up in an iron cage, his cry is, "I cannot get out; O *now* I cannot!" He gave Christian the story of his fall. "I left off to watch and be sober; I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts: I sinned against the light of the word, and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit and he is gone; I tempted the devil and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger and he has left me; I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent."

The miserable prisoner assured Christian there was no hope. He could only write bitter things against himself, avowing his sin to be utterly beyond the reach of pardon, and resigning himself without hope of remedy or release to the iron cage of despair.

In this wretched being Christian was called upon to see the danger of mere profession—the fearful peril of sloth, sin, and neglect of prayer. Most needful was this lesson to him with so much untrodden ground before him. Truly might he say, "Well, this is fearful! God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the causes of this man's

misery." This is another of those discoveries which the Holy Spirit makes to the hearts of God's people.

The spectacle of rocky-ground hearers in times of temptation falling away leads them to the solemn inquiry, "Is the root of the matter in me?" It is a fearful thought, but no more fearful than true, that a man may undergo an agony of mind almost as sad and terrible as that which in the case of genuine conviction leads on to conversion, and yet come short of heaven after all. It is also true that a child of God may by neglect of means sin himself into the condition of this man in the iron cage, and spend years of misery and doubt. Surely this should lead each Christian to deep searchings of heart. Let us tremble at the thought of relaxing a single duty. We may hold final perseverance, and find it a very precious and comforting truth, but it is well to have the fear of falling ever before our eyes. Apostacy is a very common sin, and backsliders are fearfully numerous. Those are well kept whom the Lord keeps. The man in the iron cage may serve to keep us humble, watchful, and prayerful, and this was the design of the scene. It was intended to warn but not to dishearten, and God's people may rest assured that Charnock's words are true—"Those who are the subjects of Christ's love He will not leave, for He pardoned them when they were His enemies, and He will not leave them now they are his friends. A soul may fall from the comforts of grace, but not from the habits of grace. A child of God may be cast down, but not cast off."

"Sir," said Christian, "is it not time for me to

go on my way now?" "One thing more," the Interpreter replied.

The last scene presented to Christian by the Interpreter was—

6. THE FEARFUL FACT OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT.—“So he took Christian by the hand again, and led him into a chamber where there was one rising out of bed; and as he put on his raiment he shook and trembled.”

The Interpreter made him tell Christian the cause of his terror. The man then described a dream he had had, and how he had witnessed the tremendous scene of the last judgment. Moreover, he told how his conscience had accused him, and how he sought to hide himself from the man who sat upon the cloud. In the midst of the terrible things he heard and saw he awoke out of sleep, This, too, is one of the great discoveries the Holy Spirit makes to the hearts of God's people. Among the busy occupations of life, when our smile is the gayest and our step the lightest, the conscience we have within sobers us with the remembrance of that day when the throne shall be set, the books opened, and the dead small and great stand before God.

The solemnizing thought of that day in the believer's soul is the work of the Holy Spirit. Let it serve its purpose. Let it bring the prayer to our lips, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity: quicken Thou me in Thy way.” To realize its nearness need not sadden and distress us. It is the prize-day of the Church of God.

My reader, now let me put to you the question the Interpreter put to Christian, "Hast thou considered all these things?" May the lessons of the Interpreter's house sink down in our hearts. Oh, that each of us may be under the teaching of the Church's Comforter and Guide. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy: to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever. Amen."

"Through the love of God our Saviour,
All will be well ;
Free and changeless is his favour,
All, all is well.
Precious is the blood that healed us ;
Perfect is the grace that sealed us ;
Strong the hand stretched out to shield us :
All must be well.

Though we pass through tribulation,
All will be well ;
Ours is such a full salvation,
All, all is well.
Happy, if in God confiding,
Fruitful, if in Christ abiding,
Holy, through the Spirit's guiding,
All must be well.

We expect a bright to-morrow,—
All will be well ;
Faith can sing through days of sorrow,
All, all is well.
On our Father's love relying,
Jesus every need supplying,
Or in living, or in dying,
All must be well !"

NINTH DAY.

THE CROSS.

“*The Cross of Christ.*—GAL. vi. 12.

NOW much is wrapped up in this one little phrase. Around it gathers all the sympathies of every devout and thoughtful mind. From it shines out a love which has no parallel, and the more we think of it the more we feel constrained to worship, wonder, and adore. And let us see what great and mighty truths are conveyed by this expression, “*The Cross of Christ.*” We know the material Cross was that on which one sentenced to the Roman punishment of crucifixion suffered, and we know it was the punishment of the vilest slaves. We recall the record of St. Luke, “And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.”—Luke xxiii. 33.

But when St. Paul speaks of “*The Cross of Christ*” he does not mean the material Cross. The phrase stands for the whole of the Redeemer’s sufferings—an epitome of that sad and sorrowful history commencing in Bethlehem and ending on

Calvary. This will be obvious when we call to mind such passages as the following. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."—Ephes. ii. 16. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. xii. 2. "*The Cross of Christ*," then, must be taken for all the suffering, sorrow, grief, and pain associated with the redemptive work of Christ, and the remembrance of this fact will help us to understand the next step of Christian's journey which we have, with God's help, to consider to-day.

"Now I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way therefore did burdened Christian run, but not without difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below in the bottom a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad, and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death. Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that a sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden.

He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks.

Now, as he stood looking and weeping, behold three shining ones came to him and saluted him with 'Peace be unto thee.' So the first said to him, 'Thy sins be forgiven;' the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third also set a mark upon his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bid him to look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Celestial Gate; so they went their way. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy and went on singing."

We must not lose a word in this most beautiful description. Let these divisions suggest the thoughts we have to offer upon it:—

1. THE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIAN WENT.
2. THE POINT WHICH HE REACHED.
3. THE GIFTS WHICH HE RECEIVED.

1. THE WAY IN WHICH HE WENT.—You must observe it was *the highway*—no private road, but the open and free path intended for the feet of all burdened pilgrims. It was fenced on either side *with a wall*, and that wall was called *Salvation*, so there was no danger of losing the road or missing the end. It was *up-hill*, and therefore demanded every exertion and the utmost perseverance on the part of the pilgrim with his load upon his back. On the height of this incline there was a *Cross*, and a little below, in the bottom, a *supulchre*. This is the

way in which Christian, the burdened pilgrim, went. Thus it is with the real penitent when he has been aroused to a sense of his sin, and through the operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, made anxious about the salvation of his soul. He has looked to the Saviour and is no longer under the dominion of sin, but he has not lost his load, for he has not realized that personal union with Christ which alone can give him true peace and joy. But he is in the right path, fenced on either side with a wall, so it is impossible he can miss his way, for Isaiah said "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation." Moreover, he does not loiter. He is too anxious to do that. He *runs*—but "*not without great difficulty*"—for, as Bunyan says, in "Grace-abounding," "every height is a difficulty to him that is laden with a burden, how shall we attain the heaven of heavens?" But no length of way can make him slacken his pace, and no sense of weariness turn him from his purpose. He has his hand on the plough and there is no looking back. Such are always the truly spiritually anxious. They are thoroughly in earnest. Their religion is no thing of fits and starts. The resolution of the formalist is spasmodic, a matter of impulse, the creation of temporary excitement, but his is the result of settled conviction which nothing can change, for, as St. Paul says, "we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."—Heb. iii. 14.

Behold the condition of many an anxious soul. Are there not some among us who can remember

this season in our spiritual history? We had not found peace, but we longed for it. We had not lost our burden, but, nothing daunted, we advanced to the hour of release. There was an unseen but ever present impulse which was effectual because it was divine. We were not without our doubts, but we could not turn back; we were often cast down, but always pressing on. Sometimes we sang, in sadness of heart:

“If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?”

But we could not help giving expression to the little love and hope that possessed our souls:

“Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?”

Blessed be God, the work is not our own. The path of holy desire and spiritual anxiety has the wall of Salvation on either side, and the peace at the end is no more a gift than the strength by the way—“Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. i. 6.

2. THE POINT WHICH CHRISTIAN REACHED.—He “*came up with the Cross.*” He had to mount to it. Should not this remind us of the toil, and agony, and tears of Him who “bore our griefs and carried our sorrows?” His path of anguish was up-hill. The burden He had upon Him was our guilt, but it

well nigh crushed Him. Take away this fact from Christ's work and who shall explain the bitter cry—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?"

But Christian neared the Cross, and lo, his burden yielded at every step and at last fell from his back, rolled into the sepulchre, and was seen no more.

Can anything be more scripturally beautiful than the words with which Christian expressed his joy?

What a moment is that when we realize for the first time our acceptance and our salvation in Christ—when we have, not only a general idea concerning His love for sinners and of the great value of His work, but the assurance that He died in our place, for the purpose of redeeming us personally from eternal sorrow, and bringing us in His own good time to the mansions of eternal bliss.

Why, such a moment in our life is never forgotten. It has a place in our memory which it can never lose. Then we lost the burden of sin, for we cast it upon Him. We sang with bounding hearts ;

"I lay my sins on Jesus
The spotless Lamb of God ;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursed load."

And we saw our burden roll into *the sepulchre*. We felt nothing could have removed our sin but His atoning death—His going down into the grave—and we felt for the first time the full meaning of St. Paul's words—"That they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."—2 Cor. v. 15.

Christian's burden rolling into the sepulchre at the foot of the Cross declares one of the sublimest and most precious truths of Christianity. Well has one written, "If Christ did not really die, there would be an end of all the comfort of the Gospel. Nothing short of His death could have paid man's debt to God. His incarnation, and sermons, and parables, and miracles would have availed nothing if He had not died. The penalty threatened to the first Adam was death eternal in hell. If the second Adam had not really and actually died in our stead, as well as taught us truth, the original penalty would have continued in full force against Adam and all his children. It was the life-blood of Christ which was to save our souls."

And can we forget the wonder with which we contemplated our release, and how surprised we were that we had not long since seen Christ as the bearer of our sins and the sufferer in our place? And was not the feeling of our hearts one of the truest joy and the liveliest gratitude? If we have not, like Bunyan, "longed to tell of God's mercies even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands," we have been ready to say with the rejoicing David, "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."—Ps. lxvi. 16.

And as we have looked in faith again and again at the Cross, thought of the "agony and bloody sweat, the precious death and burial," and realized all this sorrow as having been endured to give us rest, and this cruel death to have been met to bring us life, our tears have been the only expression of grati-

tude we could give, and, partners in the joy of Christian, the springs have *sent the waters down our cheeks*.

None but those who have sat down beneath the shadow of the Cross, with every fear subdued and every doubt gone, can understand this; and thousands, like the tired child upon the mother's bosom, consciously beyond the reach of care or storm, have felt the arms of redeeming love about them, and have sung :

“ For burdened ones a resting place
Beside that Cross I see ;
Here I cast off my weariness ;
No rest like this for me ! ”

This brings us to the last division of our subject.

3. THE GIFTS WHICH CHRISTIAN RECEIVED. Three shining ones came to him. With united voice they said, “ Peace be to thee.” Then he received three gifts from them. The first presented him with a free pardon—“ Thy sins be forgiven ; ” the second stripped him of his rags, and gave him a change of raiment ; the third set a mark upon his forehead and handed to him a roll with a seal upon it, bidding him look on it as he ran and give it in at the celestial gate.

What an exquisite picture is this. The poor sinner has reached peace and rest in a crucified Saviour. He sees Him as his great Surety, and loses the burden of sin, having found Him who has carried it on his behalf. Beneath the shadow of the Cross he parts with the last proud thought which kept him

from the unreserved surrender of his soul to Christ, and, keeping nothing but the contrite heart of the sinner and the faith of the little child, he says :

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come.”

And now a stream of blessing flows into his soul. Casting himself at the foot of the Cross, renouncing all other helpers but the Sinner's Friend, Pardon, Justification, Adoption become his. He walks henceforward upon a higher platform. He is stirred by nobler thoughts. He has views of divine love which melt him into tears, but send him on his way rejoicing. He has *peace*. The storm is over. The voice of Him who stilled the proud waves of Galilee's lake has said to his poor disturbed heart, “Peace, be still,” and there is “a great calm.” He has *pardon*. No longer sin, like a burden too heavy for him to bear, crushes him to the earth. He who spoke to the man sick of the palsy has spoken to him, “Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee.” He has *justification*. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Rom. v. 1. He is stripped of the rags of personal merit—having learned that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”—Isaiah lxiv. 6—and is clothed in a change of raiment, even the spotless righteousness of Him who was “made sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”—2 Cor. v. 21. And he has *adoption*. He has the mark upon his forehead as one of the Lord's

own, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."—Eph. i. 4. He has the roll with the seal upon it—"after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."—Eph. i. 13. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16.

As he runs his heavenward course he will realise his adoption in Christ through the infinite love of God the Father, "who hath sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 22. He will look on *his roll*—the assurance of his acceptance and salvation—and at last, called, guided, and sustained by grace, give it in at the celestial city—"sealed unto the day of redemption."—Eph. iv. 30.

Thus, then, these shining ones with their gifts beautifully set forth the immediate blessings which become ours the moment we really and truly embrace Christ in all His fulness as our Saviour. He is that instant "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30.

Every sin, no matter how criminal it is, is forgiven; we stand clothed in that righteousness which is a robe stained with the blood and woven by the hand of Christ; we are sealed by the Spirit as members of that family which are all to be gathered into the mansions of their Father's house; and, grasping the promise of a presence which shall never leave us, and a strength ever equal to our day, we dread neither conflict nor danger, but leap for joy like Christian, and go on singing:

“Blest cross ! blest sepulchre ! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me !”

And now, my readers, let us find in all this an application for ourselves. Have you thus found Christ, and can you rejoice in knowing that this peace, pardon, righteousness, and adoption are yours ? Never, I pray you, be satisfied until your burden has rolled down at the foot of the Cross. Never rest until you get that full, rich, satisfying view of Christ which reveals Him to you as your divine Surety, your atoning Saviour, your Advocate and Intercessor, your ever firm and stedfast Friend.

As we have seen, it is quite possible to be “looking unto Jesus,” and yet be oppressed with the burden of our sins. Thousands probably have passed through the wicket-gate and are treading that path the walls of which are Salvation, but they have not reached the Cross.

Beloved, here and here alone are to be found the full blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

An inch short of this will bring neither spiritual joy, nor peace, nor comfort. Happy, thrice happy, are those who have found rest through Christ’s sorrow, and life through His death. Happy, thrice happy, are those who have the witness in themselves, and, undismayed by coming conflict, can press onward and upward, leaning on nothing but the arm of God and consciously safe in the cradle of His love and care.

“When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died ;
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God ;
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down ;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small ;
Love so amazing—so divine
Demands my life, my soul, my all."



TENTH DAY

EARLY TRIALS.

"They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear."
PSALM lviii. 4.

THE serpent-charmers of India illustrate very strikingly the allusion in this verse and that which follows it—"which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely."—Psalm lviii. 5. It will be enough to observe that the power these men have over these reptiles of the East is most surprising.

By the use of music they are able to subject them entirely to their will. But, it is said, there is one species of serpent which defies all their skill. There is "*the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear.*" Can anything more expressively set forth those sinners who can be neither convinced nor persuaded, who turn a deaf ear to all the warnings and entreaties of those who would arouse them to a sense of danger, and who in their folly sleep out their fatal sleep, to awake in a fearful world from which there is no escape, and a terrible condition which is inevitably fixed for ever? Such were the characters which Christian met almost as soon as he had pursued his way from that Cross which had inspired him with so

much joy, and we learn how early are those trials which beset us even after we have lost our burden and received the foretaste and pledge of that glory which shall be ours in the great day which is to come. Let us now take up our story.

“I saw then in my dream that he went on thus even until he came at a bottom where he saw, a little out of the way, three men fast asleep, with fetters upon their heels. The name of the one was Simple, another Sloth, and a third Presumption. Christian then, seeing them lie in this case, went to them, if peradventure he might awake them, and cried, you are like them that sleep on the top of a mast, for the dead sea is under you, a gulph that hath no bottom; awake, therefore, and come away. Be willing also, and I will help you off with your irons. He also told them, If he that goeth about like a roaring lion comes by, you will certainly become a prey to his teeth. With that they looked upon him, and began to reply in this sort: Simple said, I see no danger; Sloth said, Yet a little more sleep; and Presumption said, Every vat must stand upon its own bottom. And so they lay down to sleep again, and Christian went on his way.”

Let us now, then, take up our first point.

1.—SIMPLE—SLOTH—PRESUMPTION.—Concerning these let us observe—where these men were—what they were doing—what their condition was.

WHERE THESE MEN WERE.—“*A little out of the way.*” They were not on the path in which

Christian was going. Such are not found in the narrow way—but just out of it—even in that broad road which leadeth to destruction. We have here the scriptural description of the unconverted—“*out of the way.*” The Wise King speaks of “the man that wandereth out of the way.”—Prov. xxi. 16. St. Paul, alluding to the state of the unregenerate world, says: “They are all gone out of the way.”—Rom. iii. 12. And again, speaking of the incomparable Priesthood of the Saviour, he writes: “Who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.”—Heb. v. 2. Thus was it with *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*—types of large classes, blind to the beauty of religion, deaf to all warning and entreaty—they are *out of the way*. In their lives they throw contempt on the glorious declaration “I am *the way*—no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”—John xiv. 6. And, in their end they supply a sad commentary on the words of Solomon—“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—Prov. xvi. 25.

AGAIN, WHAT THESE MEN WERE DOING.—They were “*fast asleep.*” There is the sleep of the soul as well as the sleep of the body. A state of supineness and indolence concerning spiritual things is a condition of slumber, so deep, so awful, that nothing less than the voice of God can break it. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”—Ephes. v. 14. Thus was it with *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*. They

were "*fast asleep*"—representing tens of thousands who close their eyes to all danger, stop their ears against all warning, and wrap round them the coverlet of indifference without ever suffering the prayer of the Psalmist to rise to their lips—"Lighten my eyes ; lest I sleep the sleep of death."—Psalm xiii. 3.

ONCE MORE—WHAT THEIR CONDITION WAS.—
"*Fetters upon their heels.* They were bound—miserable slaves—the more truly so because unconscious of the fact. Wrapped in their dreams they knew nothing of their wretched state—types of the unconverted, who are "tied and bound with the chain of their sins"—and yet, fast asleep on the bed of carnal security, unconscious of their real condition. They cry out, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

These were the characters which Christian met almost as soon as he had resumed his journey. Three men—a little out of the way—fast asleep—with fetters on their heels. *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*.

We have heard how Christian came up to these sleepers and endeavoured to arouse them. He told them of their danger, offered to rid them of their irons, warned them of the roaring lion, but all to no purpose. "Simple said, I see no danger ; Sloth said, Yet a little more sleep ; and Presumption said, Every vat must stand upon its own bottom." And it is expressively added, "and so they lay down to sleep again, and Christian went on his way,"

In the conduct of Christian, let us see the holy zeal of an enlightened conscience. He could not pass these sleepers without warning them of their peril. He could not leave them without offering to get for them the blessing he himself enjoyed. "I will help you off with your irons" was the proffer he made to them. So is it ever with those who have drank in mercy at the foot of the Cross. Knowing the power of the grace which has reached them, conscious of the sweetness of that redeeming love which constrains them, they are deeply anxious for others, and spare no pains to arouse the simple ones from their guilty sloth and to win them from their sinful presumption.

And is there not something most refreshing in the ardour which succeeds on every genuine conversion? Who is there will not forgive a little lack of prudence in the heart filled with its new love to our adorable Saviour? Give me the very errors of an earnest soul, before the cold correctness and stiff orthodoxy of fashionable Christianity.

My reader, can you see yourself in Christian? Are you filled with holy zeal in your Saviour's great cause? Have you come upon *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*, and dared to cry in their ears, "Awake, thou that sleepest"—"Escape for thy life"—"Flee from the wrath to come?"

Oh, if you are unconscious of this earnest desire to arouse the slumbering souls of the unconverted; if you care not that *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption* sleep on, and, like the Priest and the Levite, you pass by on the other side; take it as a proof that

you are scarcely awake yourself ; rest not until you have flung off the chain about your own heels, and, beneath the shadow of the Cross, implore the quickening and constraining grace of -God, that, having found comfort, hope, and joy yourself, you may go forth armed with the vigour of a new faith to win others to your Master's side.

And, alas ! how many there are represented by *Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*.

“ I see no danger,” cries one, “ ‘ to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.’—Isaiah lvi. 12. I know you preachers are always prophesying the end of the world, but I see no signs of it. It will be time enough when the peril is more obvious. Meanwhile let me alone. ‘ When I have a more convenient season I will send for thee.’ ”

Thus was it with the antediluvians when Noah preached to them. “ Flood ! ” they would say, “ What Flood ? The sky is bright and blue, the sun rises and sets as usual, the stars have not grown dim, the seasons have not halted on their way. What Flood ? Oh, poor silly old man, lay by your hammers and go home. Discharge your workmen and have done with these ravings. We see no danger. Let us alone. We are too busy to attend to you.” Such was Pharaoh when he said “ Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go ? ” He saw no danger. The presence of Moses and Aaron created no fear in that proud and rebellious soul. He knew better, and flung every warning from him. He treated the servants of

Jehovah with disdain, and, wrapped in his royal pride, he laughed all their threatenings to scorn.

"I see no danger" arises from thousands of lips. In vain, like Christian, we tell them of God's broken law. In vain we tell them of God's inflexible justice. In vain we warn them of the broad road, and invite them to the narrow way. In vain we tell them there is such a place as hell. They answer as they lay down to sleep again," *"I see no danger,"* and distressed and disheartened we have to go on our way.

"A little more sleep," says another, "why do you make me miserable with such gloomy subjects? If I join you, how can I take my ease or follow my pleasure? I am young—I am healthy—I am strong—let me have my fill of worldly enjoyments and do not disturb me by making me think I am doing wrong, and filling my mind with thoughts of a sad future which I do not believe will ever come."

Such was Felix when Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, judgment to come." He trembled. Conscience was disturbed. But Sloth said *"a little more sleep."* "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."—Acts xxiv. 25. Thus is it with multitudes. They would be let alone. They hug their chains. They do not want to awake out of sleep. They are satisfied to remain as they are. Oh, fearful state! There is nothing so sad, so melancholy, as the slumbers of the unconverted soul. Like the fumes of opium they are pleasant, but alas! they are fatal. My readers, are any of you asleep? When earnest

and anxious friends would arouse you, do you cry "*Yet a little more sleep?*" Be wise. In the strength of divine grace start to your feet and gain the road that leads to the celestial city. You may be on the very border land. How fearful is the thought—as fearful as it is true—it is possible to be *fast asleep*, and yet only "*a little out of the way.*"

"*Every vat must stand on its own bottom,*" says a third, "Thank you, kind Christian," says *Presumption*, "it is very good of you, no doubt, to trouble yourself about me, but pray mind your own business. I am glad if you really feel as happy as you say you do, and I hope you will not be disappointed of the heaven-built walls, the pearly gates, and streets of shining gold, but I shall really feel very much obliged if you will allow me to enjoy my own opinion. My religion, I admit, is not quite the same as yours, but I think it is much more sensible. I try to do my duty—I have never done anybody any harm—I pay my way—I subscribe to the charities—and I am quite willing to leave the rest. '*Every vat must stand on its own bottom.*'" Such is the Secularist who is prepared to denounce the Bible as a fable and the Gospel as a dream. For this life he lives—for this world he toils. He stands on the ground of his own merit, and while he is bound to admit the fact of death, he laughs to scorn all the solemn issues of judgment and eternity.

My dear reader, these three men—*Simple*, *Sloth*, and *Presumption*—have had their followers in every age. They are "*fast asleep*," almost under the shadow of the Cross—beneath the most faithful

preaching—untouched by our most earnest appeals—uninfluenced by our most fearful warnings—wrapped in sleep as profound as the slumber of the grave itself.

Oh, if I have sketched the condition of one who reads these lines, let me urge on such the duty of instant decision.

Parley with the spirit of slumber and you are conquered. Of all slaves the sluggard is the truest and the saddest. It is the same in spiritual things. A mighty effort must be made. Every muscle will be wanted if the chain is to be broken and flung away. “Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.” *Simple, Sloth, Presumption*, arouse yourselves! “Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light!”

Our second point will be a very brief notice of two more characters on whom Christian came soon after he had left the sleepers.

2. FORMALIST AND HYPOCRISY.—Christian is described as pursuing his journey, very much concerned at what he had seen, and we read, “as he was troubled thereabouts he espied two men come tumbling over a wall on the left hand of the narrow way; and they came up apace to him. The name of the one was Formalist, and the name of the other Hypocrisy.”

I beg you will read at your leisure the conversation which Christian had with *Formalist and Hypocrisy*. I may observe that they both answered together, being fellow countrymen and bosom friends.

They were both born in the same land—the land of Vain-Glory, and both were seeking the same thing—praise at Mount Zion.

And, wherein do they differ? They are each a type of character, and each represents vast numbers of professing Christians. In *Formalist* we see those who, under a robe of religiousness, deceive themselves. In *Hypocrisy* we see those who deliberately lay themselves out to deceive others. Asked why they had not come in at the gate which stood at the beginning of the way, they replied that the inhabitants of Vain-Glory considered it too far, and that their usual way was to make a short cut of it and climb over the wall. Christian reminded them such was a trespass against the Lord of the City. They told him there was no need to trouble about that, for they had custom for what they did and could produce, if need were, witness to it for more than a thousand years.

In vain Christian asked, “Will your practice stand trial at law?” Again they pleaded custom, and, “besides, said they, if we get into the way, what matter is it which way we get in? if we are in, we are in. Thou art but in the way who, as we perceive, came in at the gate; and we are also in the way that came tumbling over the wall. Wherein, now, is thy condition better than ours?”

What a wonderful picture we have here. *Formalist and Hypocrisy* have thousands of followers. Their principle is, “a short cut to heaven.” They want to reach the celestial city, but they prefer not going quite so far round as the wicket-gate. They

who go to the Priest for absolution take a short cut. They who do penance as a satisfaction for sin and afflict their bodies for the sake of their souls, take a short cut. They who are contented to believe just as the Church believes, and do not care to read the Bible for themselves, take a short cut. They who trust for salvation in their baptism, or rest satisfied with either Church, sacrament, or ministry, take a short cut. Short cuts have ruined millions. They may do very well for the inhabitants of Vain-Glory, but, while Formalist and Hypocrisy climb up "some other way" and are therefore thieves and robbers, Christian will take the path authorised by the Lord of the city, through the wicket-gate. "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Formalist and Hypocrisy could not see much difference between themselves and Christian. As to the laws and ordinances of which Christian spoke they doubted not they should as conscientiously do them as he.

"Therefore, said they, we see not wherein thou differest from us, but by the coat that is on thy back, which was, as we trow, given thee by some of thy neighbours to hide the shame of thy nakedness."

To many there may not appear very much difference between the real Christian and the mere formalist and hypocrite. To some, all appear travelling the same road. My Christian brother, you must expect to be misjudged by those who have no sympathy with your desires and no belief in your views. The very coat on your back will give

them the opportunity of turning your deepest convictions into ridicule. How do you meet such opposition? Can you, like the hero of our story, stand firm in the assurance that no laws and ordinances can save you, and that there is only one way to heaven, even through the one door appointed by the Lord of the city—the door Christ Jesus? Can you tell of His kindness to you in giving to you that robe of righteousness for those miserable rags which once covered you? Can you feel assured that he will know you in this dress when you arrive at the gate of the city? Can you speak of the mark upon your forehead—the sanctifying grace of His Holy Spirit—which seals you as His own—and of the roll—“the exceeding sweet and precious promises”—the assurance of your adoption and eternal safety?

If all this happiness be yours, then let Formalist and Hypocrisy laugh. Take your path and leave them to theirs. Let your eyes be often on the roll which the shining ones have given you. Live on the promises. He who would reach heaven must expect very much to walk alone. But remember “the kingdom of God is within you,” and, with angels around you, and a world beneath your feet, you shall enter one day into the celestial city, and depart no more for ever.

“Sinner; turn, why will ye die?
God your Maker, asks you why—
God who did your being give,
Made you with Himself to live—
He the fatal course demands,
Asks the work of His own hands;
Why; ye thankless creatures, why
Will you cross His love, and die?

Sinner, turn ; why will ye die ?
God, your Saviour, asks you why—
God, who did your souls retrieve,
Died Himself that ye might live.
Will you let Him die in vain,
Crucify the Lord again ?
Why ; ye ransomed sinners, why
Will you slight His grace, and die ?

Sinner, turn ; why will ye die ?
God the Spirit, asks you why—
He who all your lives hath striven,
Urged you to contend for heaven.
Will you not His grace receive ?
Will you still refuse to live ?
Why, ye long sought sinners, why
Will you grieve your God, and die ?”



ELEVENTH DAY.

THE HILL DIFFICULTY.

“Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”—1 THESS. v. 5, 6.

THAT which St. Paul here applies to the second coming of our Lord is applicable to the Christian life in general. As sincere Christians professedly we are enlightened by the Spirit of God. Our walk through the world is distinguished by the absence of darkness, by wakefulness, watchfulness, spiritual activity. Others sleep. Indifference closes their eyes, not only to all the perils of their condition, but to all the beauty of holiness which shines forth in those who are “the children of the light and of the day.” And the will of God is our victory over every enemy in our path. We have a pledge which we know shall never be broken as our strongest consolation in the hour of temptation and trial.

But while God engages to do His part we have to do ours. Divine sovereignty and human effort are links in the same chain. Therefore, while the

apostle would leave no traveller to Zion without the assurance of God's presence, the ministry of holy angels, and the bright home awaiting him, he adds the solemn caution and injunction of our text: "*let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*" And this is the same lesson conveyed by that interesting portion of Bunyan's Allegory which we have to consider this day.

The author of the "*Pilgrim's Progress*" had studied human nature and knew it to be weak and frail taken even at its best. His own spiritual experience had taught him the need of incessant prayerfulness and watchfulness in the journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. He had learned that the holiest and best were liable to fall and lose their assurance. No man more strongly than himself ever asserted the fact that personal salvation need be no matter of uncertainty or doubt, but none ever felt more powerfully the necessity for giving all diligence to make his "*calling and election sure.*" We have seen Christian with his burden on his back. We have seen that burden roll off into the mouth of the sepulchre at the foot of the Cross. We have seen Christian with all his sins forgiven, clothed in a beautiful robe, sealed as the inheritor of future blessing, and the possessor of the assurance of his acceptance which could cheer him onward and upward to the very gates of his celestial home. We have heard how with exulting heart he received these gifts from the three shining ones, and, evidently shrinking from no effort and fearing no danger, "*gave three leaps for joy and went on singing.*"

In the last chapter we dwelt upon the early trials on which he came almost as soon as he had turned from the Cross. We left Simple, Sloth, and Presumption fast asleep where he found them. Formalist and Hypocrisy walked by his side, but to the solemn things he pressed upon them they "gave him no answer; only they looked upon each other and laughed." Very differently was Christian employed. He kept before the mockers. Deeply he felt their folly, for his talk with himself was "sometimes sighingly and sometimes comfortably." But his eyes were upon the roll which the shining ones gave him, and he was refreshed.

We now resume our story. The Dreamer tells us—"I beheld then that they all went on till they came to the foot of the hill Difficulty, at the bottom of which was a spring. There were also in the same place two other ways, besides that which came straight from the gate: one turned to the left hand and the other to the right, at the bottom of the hill; but the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of the going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty."

Arrived at the *Hill Difficulty*, let us first look at the peculiarities of the place, and secondly at what happened to Christian there.

1. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE PLACE.—From the description here given to us we see that it was steep—its very name implies this—at the bottom there was a spring of water—there were three paths—two at the foot of the hill, one to the

right and the other to the left called Danger and Destruction—and a third up the hill straight before the Pilgrims:

Now let us see the spiritual meaning of all this. We must not miss the lessons which the illustrious Dreamer meant to give us. When we have reached the foot of the Cross we are *on the road* to heaven, but we are not *in* it. If we think from that moment it will be nothing but bright days and plain sailing we shall find ourselves greatly mistaken.

There is the *Hill Difficulty*. We must look out for it and not be surprised if we have to scale it on our hands and knees. Do you inquire why this hill should be placed in our way? I answer, because we have to endure hardness as soldiers of Jesus Christ. And not only so. Our faith has to be tested and proved. You remember how Abraham mounted the Hill Difficulty when God said to him "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."—Gen. xxii. 2. You remember how Job mounted the Hill Difficulty when with shaven head and rent garment, as calamity after calamity broke upon him and the iron entered his soul, he said "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job. i. 21. You remember how Noah mounted the Hill Difficulty when for a hundred and twenty years he hammered at a strange ship amidst the laughter and ridicule of the witlings of his day.—Gen. vi. 3. You remember how Peter mounted the Hill Difficulty

when beneath the lowly garb and despised person of the Teacher of Nazareth he saw Him of whom Isaiah wrote and David sang—"The light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel." "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—Matt. xvi. 16.

My reader, there was deep meaning in those words of our Lord addressed to His disciples of old—"verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."—Matt. xvii. 20. What was this but declaring that the province of Faith is to mount the *Hill Difficulty*? And can we suppose that in this conflict with evil, this battle with sorrow, temptation, and trial, we shall be left unassisted? What does Bunyan mean to teach us by that spring at the bottom of the Hill? Are we not told that before Christian began to climb he applied to the spring, and, having drunk and refreshed himself, went rejoicing up the hill? Does not this set before us the assurance of strength equal to our day? Does it not remind us of the prophet's words: "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them?"—Isaiah xlix. 10.

When we look up the Hill Difficulty and think of its rugged path shall we not comfort ourselves with the Psalmist's words—"All my springs are in thee?" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7), and rejoice in that promised grace which cheered him in the darkest hour and

nerved him for the roughest way? “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.”—Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

We see, then, every Christian has to mount the Hill Difficulty. There is many an evil habit to be put down and conquered, many a struggling lust to be crushed and overcome, many a trial to be manfully met and vanquished, many a plant of selfishness, pride, and worldliness to be uprooted and destroyed. But see what springs of strength, comfort, and refreshment are provided. We are not called upon to climb the Hill Difficulty unaided. All our springs are in Christ.

“I heard the voice of Jesus say
Behold I freely give
The living water—thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live.

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.”

But let us see the fate of *Formalist* and *Hypocrisy*. They saw the hill was steep and high. They looked at the two paths—Danger and Destruction—and, supposing that they would meet again at the end with that hard and rugged road up which Christian went, Formalist took one path and Hypocrisy the other, both perishing at last, one lost in a great wood, and the other in “a wide field full of dark mountains, where he stumbled and fell and rose no more.”

We must notice both these wretched men professedly desired to reach the Celestial City. They supposed the paths they took would finally bring them there. Thus is it with thousands. They are frightened at the Hill Difficulty and turn from the narrow way into the crooked paths of expediency, and full, it may be, of excellent resolutions and good desires, they perish in their sins.

Now let us look at Christian. He went quickly enough at first, but at last his running and going became clambering, and upon his hands and knees he toiled up the hill.

Thus is it with the Christian life. With what alacrity we start. With fresh hopes and new-born love in our hearts, we think we cannot get on fast enough. But we soon find the hill-top is not reached so easily. Tests and trials of faith confront us, but, having drunk of the spring, the grace that is in Christ, we “press forward to the mark,” mindful of the assurance “My grace is sufficient for thee,” and confident of the victory which shall finally be ours.

“Weak as you are, you shall not faint,
Or fainting shall not die ;
Jesus, the strength of ev’ry saint,
Will aid you from on high.

As surely as He overcame,
And triumphed once for you ;
So surely, you that love His name,
Shall triumph in Him too.”

2. WHAT HAPPENED TO CHRISTIAN ON THE HILL DIFFICULTY.—Let us quote the words of the

story : “ Now about the midway to the top of the hill was a pleasant harbour, made by the Lord of the hill for the refreshing of weary travellers. Hither therefore Christian got, where also he sat down to rest him. Then he pulled his roll out of his bosom, and read therein to his comfort. He also now began afresh to take a review of the coat or garment that was given him as he stood by the Cross. Thus pleasing himself a while, he at last fell unto a slumber, and thence into a fast sleep which detained him in that place until it was almost night ; and in his sleep his roll fell out of his hand. Now, as he was sleeping, there came one to him and waked him, saying ‘ Go to the ant, thou sluggard ; consider her ways, and be wise.’ And with that Christian suddenly started up, and sped on his way, and went apace till he came to the top of the hill.”

Observe, this pleasant harbour is provided by the Lord of the hill. God very graciously grants His toiling weary people seasons of special comfort, “ times of refreshing,” from His presence. At such periods they feel an unusual sense of joy and peace, and realize more truly than ever their acceptance and salvation. But it is possible for resting to become self-indulgence and it is very easy to be satisfied with ourselves instead of having all our satisfaction in Christ. The shining ones bade Christian look on his roll *as he ran*—they never told him to rest and read it. Here was his error—yielding to the drowsy prayerless spirit—thinking more of the coat than the real owner of it—and indulging in thoughts which might please himself, he fell first into a doze, then

into a deep sleep, lost time, and worse than that, lost his roll. Thus is it often in the Christian life. We get self-satisfied—we comfort ourselves in the promises and rest in the conviction of our acceptance, but, taking ease where we ought only to take refreshment, we sleep when we should be pressing on, fall into a listless inactive state of mind, and lose our assurance altogether.

Let us learn the lesson. We have no time to rest. Our duty is to go forward. Refreshment we may take, but not ease. If we would keep the roll of our assurance, we must watch and pray—but never sleep.

Believer, do not forget this. It is a mercy God has not left you to slumber on. The faith of assurance you lost in the harbour, but, thank God, you carried the faith of reliance with you to the top of the Hill. Thus lovingly does God deal with His people. He casts them down, but He does not cast them off, and they sing :

“O God, thy mercies fail me never.

Where once thou lov’st, thou lov’st for ever.”

“Now when he was got up to the top of the hill there came two men running against him amain ; the name of the one was Timorous, and of the other Mistrust : to whom Christian said, Sirs, what is the matter ? you run the wrong way. Timorous answered that they were going to the City of Zion and had got up that difficult place : but, said he, the further we go the more danger we meet with ; wherefore we turned, and are going back again.

“Yes, said Mistrust, for just before us lie a couple of lions in the way (whether sleeping or waking we know not) and we could not think, if we came within reach, but they would presently pull us in pieces.

“Then, said Christian, you make me afraid; but whither shall I flee to be safe? If I go back to mine own country, that is prepared for fire and brimstone, and I shall perish there. I must venture: to go back is nothing but death; to go forward is fear of death and life everlasting beyond it. I will yet go forward.”

Thus, in the conduct of *Timorous* and *Mistrust* we have a picture of stony-ground hearers. “The same is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”—Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

Such for a time look well. They seem as earnest, as active, as spiritually-minded, as full of good resolutions and holy desires, as those who have really the root of the matter in them. But they are soon frightened at the lions in the way. Difficulties on which they had never counted break up all their good wishes, and they return to the world which in their hearts they had really never forsaken. “So *Mistrust* and *Timorous* ran down the hill, and *Christian* went on his way.”

It was then Christian missed his roll. What *Mistrust* and *Timorous* had said had greatly troubled him, and he had nothing to console him.

True indeed it is “weak faith saves: strong faith assures.” When we lose our assurance we do not lose our souls, but we do lose our comfort. It was thus with Christian. He went forward, but with a heavy heart and trembling step. He missed his roll—his evidence was gone—he was “in great distress.”

At last he thought of his sleep in the arbour. The first thing he did was to fall on his knees and ask God forgiveness, and then, searching on every side of him, he went back to look for his roll. And the truth flashed upon him. He sighed and wept as he thought how he had slept where he ought only to have taken a little refreshment.

The remembrance of the arbour renewed his sorrow, and, writing bitter things against himself, he reached it, and for a while sat down and wept. At last, looking sorrowfully under the settle, he espied his roll, and with trembling and haste he caught it up and put it into his bosom. Sweetly does the Dreamer tell us how he thanked God for so graciously directing his steps, how nimbly he went up the rest of the hill, how the sun went down, and how sad and sorrowful he became at the remembrance of the past, and at the thought of what *Mistrust* and *Timorous* had told him; and he concludes this wonderful chapter of his Allegory with the words: “Thus he went on his way. But while he was thus bewailing his unhappy miscarriage, he lift up his eyes, and behold there was a very stately palace before him, the name of which was Beautiful, and it stood just on the highway side.”

Let us reflect for a few moments on this. The

Christian may lose his assurance, but he shall recover it. Is he brought to see the guilt of self-indulgence and the folly of resting in the promises to the neglect of watchfulness and prayer? His first act is to ask for pardon—his next is to regain his evidence. His peace returns—but not his joy at once. The sun goes down upon him. Disquieting fears and disturbing doubts assail him, and with sadness he pursues his heavenly journey.

Believer, take heart and say with Christian, “*I will yet go forward.*” The Lord of the way watches your every step. These dark days shall soon be over and the Palace Beautiful—God’s Beautiful House of light and refreshment—shall rise before you.

Is it not a mercy to know that whilst so many turn back you are constrained to press on? You lost your roll yesterday but you have found it to-day. While others have tempted you to return, the conviction of your heart, in spite of all your weak faith, has been “*I must venture. I will yet go forward.*” Let past falls make you more careful for the future. Beware of the arbours. They are for refreshment—not for rest. Remember—you are on a journey—not at home. Be ever watchful—continually in prayer—and strive, by divine help, to preserve the assurance of your acceptance and salvation. Oh for the strong hope and confidence of the assured believer. It is this that makes us superior to all “the insect cares of life.” It is this that sends us forward in spite of the lions in the way. But if we have it not, let us not despair. Are we relying

upon Christ? If we are, our salvation is certain, and, assured of it or not, “when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”—Col. iii. 4.

“This is not my place of resting,
Mine’s a city yet to come ;
Onward to it I am hasting,
On to my eternal home.

In it all is light and glory,
O’er it shines a nightless day ;
Every trace of sin’s sad story,
All the curse has passed away.

There the Lamb our Shepherd leads us,
By the streams of life along ;
On the freshest pastures feeds us,
Turns our sighing into song.

Soon we pass the desert dreary,
Soon we bid farewell to pain ;
Never more be sad or weary,
Never, never sin again.”



TWELFTH DAY.

THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.”—MALACHI iii. 16.

THE age in which the prophet Malachi lived was peculiarly corrupt and degenerate. But notwithstanding the prevalent ungodliness, there were some who retained their piety and preserved their zeal for God. There were those who *“feared the Lord.”* Few and feeble as they were they held fast their integrity, and, though iniquity abounded and the love of many had waxed cold, they cheered and comforted each other on with holy conversation and kindly counsel, the objects of a love which had never left them since it called them from the world, and made them the possessors of a faith of which neither reproach nor persecution could deprive them.—*“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.”*

And thus has it ever been. “It is with Christians as with burning coals. If these are scattered far apart, one after the other is easily extinguished; but, when collected together, the fire of one preserves

that of the other, and the glowing coals often ignite others that lie near." The power of association has ever been recognised by Christianity. In its early dawn under the form of Judaism it was remembered in the Passover and Peace offerings which were directed to be eaten in company, and in the long journeys at the annual feasts which thrice a year brought the Lord's people together. And in the noonday of Christianity is it likely a similar provision should have been forgotten? The very ordinances of our faith, so simple and so beautiful in a dispensation in which the substance has taken the place of the shadow, are means to the same great and blessed end. The social worship which gathers us together at stated times within the walls of the Sanctuary—the Holy Communion, the sweet emblem of the essential unity of Christ's kingdom—the comprehensive prayer which proclaims in two words the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man—the teaching of Him who "spake as never man spake" and that of those who spake and wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost"—the very churches which, though manifesting much diversity in constitution and opinion, are linked to one common throne, and bound up in one common Saviour—all—all is a recognition of the power of association in its highest, noblest, and purest application. "*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.*"

And this truth stands prominently forth in the portion of the "Pilgrim's Progress" before us to-day.

Christian has scaled the Hill Difficulty, and here was the point at which we left him at our last

meeting : “Thus he went on his way. But while he was thus bewailing his unhappy miscarriage, he lift up his eyes, and behold there was a very stately palace before him, the name of which was Beautiful, and it stood just on the highway side.”

That you may rightly understand what is to follow, let me say that *the Palace Beautiful* represents a Church—as defined in the 19th article of the Church of England—“a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance ;” and the lesson conveyed is the power of association in spiritual things and the necessity for Church-fellowship for the deepening of piety and the cultivation of Christian graces.

It seems to me likely enough Bunyan had in his mind that period in his own history when he joined the Baptist Church at Bedford—a step which issued in such immense benefit to his soul. Be this as it may, I am quite sure he intended to assert the supreme importance of every believer being united with some branch of the Christian Church and the blessed reality of that article of the ancient Creed—“the communion of Saints.” Let us, then, accept this fact as beyond all dispute.

There is much in the divisions of the Church catholic over which we may mourn, but let us not doubt that in them great purposes are being worked out and great ends will be accomplished. Perhaps after all we shall find they were not such gigantic evils as we supposed. It may be, they are parts of that wondrous machinery which, under the divine

hand, is to usher in that glorious hour when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." But the Word of God, supported by our daily experience, asserts the importance of Church-fellowship. There are those who dispute it. They tell us they worship God in the green fields and listen to no preachers but the works of His hand. To this we reply—the God of Nature and the God of Christianity are one. He who thinks the most of His grace will think the most of the works of His hand ; and the same Book which says "consider the wondrous works of God," (Job xxxvii. 14), also says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is."—Heb. x. 25.

This will be found to be the teaching of *the Palace Beautiful*. We must now send Christian on his journey.

The path leading to the gate of the Palace was "*a very narrow passage*," some distance from the Porter's lodge, and the two lions, of which Timorous and Mistrust had spoken with so much alarm, were in the way. Let this remind us, in the first place, that a public profession of religion involved in our formal union with "a congregation of faithful men" requires *courage*. It is not the broad road trodden by the unthinking many, but the "narrow passage" frequented by the thoughtful few. We shall have difficulties to encounter and opposition to meet. All the social forces of the world have ever been opposed to decision in religion. If we would tread the "narrow passage" we must be contented to leave

the multitude and dare to walk alone. Let it remind us, in the second place, that in throwing in our lot with God's people we require *faith*. We shall find the lions in the way.

There will be dangers, affecting our reputation, our social standing, our appearance in the eyes of the world, and troubles very hard at first sight for flesh and blood to bear—but, as Christian found so we shall find, these dangers and troubles are but imaginary—“*the lions were chained but he saw not the chains.*” Like him we shall be afraid and perhaps in the moment of unbelief see nothing but death before us.

But let us hear what *Watchful*, the porter at the gate, said to him as he saw him halting as if like Mistrust and Timorous he would go back—“Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none: keep in the midst of the path and no hurt shall come unto thee.” Thus the strong element in the confession of Christ is *faith*. It is this that bears us forward in the narrow passage and enables us to turn a deaf ear to the roar of the lions. Like Daniel, we shall say “the lions have not hurt me,” and braced with a vigour which is all-powerful because all-divine, we shall seek the congregation of the faithful, asking with Christian of the porter at the gate—“*Sir, what house is this? and may I lodge here to-night?*”

We have now brought Christian to the gate of *the Palace Beautiful*—an exquisite picture of the believer entering upon the enjoyment of the communion of saints.

In the conversations which follow we have a sweet mingling of godly sincerity and loving intercourse.

Let us try to unfold this as clearly as we can.

1. GODLY SINCERITY. This we see in Christian.

In his conversation, first with *Watchful* and *Discretion* at the gate, and afterwards with *Prudence*, *Piety*, and *Charity*, godly sincerity is most conspicuous.

“The porter asked him whence he was and whither he was going?” Observe his reply to these questions and to the two others which succeed them. “I am come from the City of Destruction and am going to Mount Zion ; but because the sun is now set, I desire, if I may, to lodge here to-night My name is now Christian, but my name at the first was Graceless ; I came of the race of Japheth, whom God will persuade to dwell in the tents of Shem I had been here sooner, but that, wretched man as I am ! I slept in the arbour that stands on the hill-side. Nay, I had, notwithstanding that, been here much sooner, but that in my sleep I lost my evidence, and came without it to the brow of the hill ; and then, feeling for it and finding it not, I was forced with sorrow of heart to go back to the place where I slept my sleep : where I found it and now I am come.”

What godly sincerity there is in all this. Not a wrong step is hidden, not a single fault palliated or excused. He does not hesitate to avow the desire of his heart, but he owns to all his mistakes and admits all his sin.

Let us see in this one clear evidence of living Christianity. None who by the grace of God have become real Christians will care to cloak anything. This is characteristic of all genuine godliness. Who can read the Bible without discerning this fact? The very writers of it supply us with examples. How boldly does Moses say of Israel, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you."—Deut. ix. 24. How nobly he tells of the falsehood of Abraham and Isaac, of the perfidy of Jacob, of the guilt of Aaron his brother in the matter of the golden calf, and of his own sin which excluded him from Canaan.

We see the same spirit in the Evangelists and Apostles. Are they wanting in faith, possessing less than a Gentile Centurion? (Matt. viii. 10). Do they call down upon themselves the rebuke of their Master? "Are ye also yet without understanding?"—Matt. xv. 16. Are two of them guilty of worldly ambition and ten of wounded pride? The plain, sad, unvarnished tale is told, not a fault kept back, and not an excuse offered. You never find St. Paul palliating his guilt. He never forgot that he had been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." You never find St. Peter apologizing for his fall. Each of them could say with St. Paul, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world."—2 Cor. i. 12.

My dear readers, when we throw in our lot with the Lord's people let us deal in all frankness with

them. If we can tell of sins we have committed and guilt we have incurred, we shall do well, like Christian, to confess all. And should we not bear in mind that the very contrast of what we are now with what we once were is a witness to the grace and love of our Father who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light? May we not say:—

“ All that I *was*, my sin, my guilt,
My death, was all my own :
All that I *am* I owe to Thee,
My gracious God, alone.

The evil of my former state
Was mine, and only mine ;
The good in which I now rejoice
Is Thine, and only Thine.

Thy grace first made me feel my sin,
And taught me to believe ;
Then, in believing, peace I found,
And now, I live, I live.

All that I am e'en here on earth,
All that I hope to be—
When Jesus comes, and glory dawns—
I owe it, Lord, to Thee.”

God grant us that deep humility which is ever the attendant on true piety, and that godly sincerity which, hiding nothing and confessing all, is ever ready to say, “ By the grace of God I am what I am.”

But, secondly, in the conversations of this beautiful chapter of our Allegory, we have—

2.—LOVING INTERCOURSE.—*Watchful*, the porter, called *Discretion*, and concerning the latter

there is one of those little touches so characteristic of Bunyan. When Christian had replied to her questions and said "I have so much the more a desire to lodge here to-night, because by what I perceive this place was built by the Lord of the Hill for the relief and security of pilgrims"—it is added, "*So she smiled, but the water stood in her eyes ; and after a little pause she said, I will call forth two or more of the family.*"

What did those tears mean ? Did they not tell of sweet sympathy with Christian in all he had passed through, and holy joy at his presenting himself for admission at the *Palace Beautiful* ? My reader, the sight of a Christian uniting himself with God's people is ever a refreshing and joyous one. To see such breaking away from all his fears and confessing Christ before the world, has made the water stand in many eyes.

And how suggestive is that action of *Discretion* in calling out *Prudence*, and *Piety*, and *Charity*. What can be more beautiful than the welcome these dwellers in the Palace gave to Christian ? "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord ; this house was built by the Lord of the Hill, on purpose to entertain such pilgrims in."

Thus is it the office of *Watchful* and *Discretion* at the gate of the visible Church to bring together those whose sympathies are one, to guard against the admission of hypocrites and dissemblers, and take young converts, as Barnabas took Saul, to the company of those who will bid them welcome to their hearts and homes.

I must ask you to read for yourselves the conversation of Christian with the three sisters. It is full of interest and will stir up many reflections in the thoughtful mind. I have only time and space to glance at it.

Piety commences with the question, "*What moved you at first to betake yourself to a pilgrim's life?*" Christian then told her the story of his pilgrimage, how he had been driven out of his country by a dreadful sound in his ears, the deep conviction that he would be destroyed if he remained there.

She then inquired, "*But how did it happen that you came out of your country this way?*" Christian ascribed everything to God's grace and mercy, and the kindness of Evangelist in directing him to the Wicket-gate.

"*But did you not come by the house of the Interpreter?*" said *Piety*. Christian then recounted all the lessons he had learned in the Interpreter's house, the loss of his burden at the sight of the One bleeding upon a tree, the meeting with the three shining ones with the gifts they had bestowed upon him, the story of Simple, Sloth, and Presumption asleep a little out of the way, Formalist and Hypocrisy who came tumbling over the wall, the hard work he had on the Hill Difficulty, the lions in the narrow passage, and the encouragement he had received from the porter at the gate.

Then *Prudence* began. The questions of *Prudence* were of a more searching character, having reference to his thoughts and feelings respecting the

place of his birth. “ *Do you think sometimes of the country from whence you came ?* ” Christian assured her that he did so only with shame and detestation, adding, “ but now I desire a better country that is a heavenly.” He acknowledged the inward conflicts of which he was painfully conscious, and how few and far between were the golden hours when his carnal thoughts were vanquished within him. When asked to mention the means by which this occasional victory was obtained, he replied, “ Yes, when I think what I saw at the Cross, that will do it ; and when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, that will do it ; and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it.” *Prudence* asked him why he was so desirous of going to Mount Zion. Sweetly Christian replied, “ Why, there I hope to see Him alive that did hang dead upon the Cross ; and there I hope to be rid of all those things that to this day are in me an annoyance to me : there, they say, there is no death ; and there I shall dwell with such company as I like best. For to tell you the truth I love Him because I was by Him eased of my burden ; and I am weary of my inward sickness. I would fain be where I should die no more, and with the company that shall continually cry, ‘ Holy, holy, holy.’ ”

Then *Charity* began. True to her name she inquired about his family. Christian, weeping, informed her of his efforts to save them and how he had seemed to them as one that mocked, how with much affection he had prayed to God for them, and how not even his tears or his sad countenance had been sufficient to induce them to accompany him.

Charity asked him what they could say for themselves. Christian told her his wife was afraid of losing the world, and his children were given over to the foolish delights of youth. Moreover, he assured her that though he could not commend his own life, being conscious of many failings he had been very wary of giving them occasion by any unseemly action to make them averse to going on pilgrimage. Indeed, it was for this very thing they had told him he was too precise and that he had denied himself of things for their sakes in which they saw no evil.

Charity was evidently struck with the sweet affection and deep humility of this answer, and was obliged to confess that Christian was fully warranted in the course he had taken. "Indeed, 'Cain hated his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous;' and, if thy wife and children have been offended with thee for this, they thereby show themselves to be implacable to good; and thou hast delivered thy soul from their blood."

Thus did Christian enjoy loving intercourse with these three inmates of the *Palace Beautiful*. Here we must leave them for the present. But let us learn that in the communion of Saints *Discretion*, *Prudence*, *Piety*, and *Charity*, four of the Christian graces, grow. Happy is that Church in which these fruits of the Spirit are found in rich abundance. Well has one said, "How 'beautiful' must that Church be where *Watchful* is the porter; where *Discretion* governs, where *Prudence* takes the oversight; where *Piety* conducts the worship; and where *Charity* endears the members one to another."

And as members of a Christian Church let us see to it that some such experience as that we have been considering is our own. It is well to tell out at times the hopes and fears which have filled our hearts and the dangers and difficulties we have conquered in our way. It is well to be able to show the wonderful things that have happened to us at the Cross of Christ. It is well to give proof of the love we bear to our Saviour and of the work of grace in our hearts by our grief over the carnal thoughts and worldly desires which burden and distress us. It is well to clear ourselves of the blood of others and avow the fact that we have done our best to win those we love from the sin and danger of the unconverted state.

Dear reader, it may be we have to travel to the Celestial City without those who are nearest and dearest to us. Let us, however, in the communion of saints, by the help of God, live in the exercise of every Christian grace.

Let us suffer our sympathies to go forth to all those whose truest and best love is centred in the Saviour.

Be it ours to live in the enjoyment of the true fellowship of Saints, the loving intercourse of souls filled with kindred desires and warmed by common sympathies, and as soldiers of the Church militant let us look on to the Church triumphant when the sword will be sheathed for ever and all life be an anthem of eternal praise.

“ Let all the saints terrestrial sing
With those to glory gone ;

For all the servants of our King,
In earth and heaven are one.

One family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God
To His command we bow ;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Our spirits too shall quickly join,
Like theirs with glory crown'd,
And shout to see our Captain's sign,
To hear His trumpet sound."



THIRTEENTH DAY.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”—

MATT. xviii. 20.

I SHOULD be willing to rest my belief in the divinity of our blessed Lord on this single text.

In the face of such a declaration as this it is a matter of supreme astonishment to me that any can be found to question it. It declares as plainly as words can declare it, that wherever God's people meet together, whether it be in large numbers beneath the dome of the cathedral or as “two or three” in an upper room, Jesus Christ is in the midst of them. It declares, that though there are ten thousand such assemblies gathered together at the same time, representing the greatest diversity in worldly rank, and meeting under almost an infinite variety of circumstances, Jesus Christ is in the midst of them. How sweet is the thought. What comfort and encouragement it brings home to the souls of all who meet together for holy purposes, whether it be for public worship, or for sending the Gospel to the heathen, or for the reading of God's Word, or for the supplication of our Father's blessing at “the altar of

the household." With what joy we meet the taunts of the unbelieving world. We are deeply sensible of our weakness. We know we are but a feeble few. But let men say what they will, and ridicule us as they may, we stand on ground from which they can never drive us—the sure words of the Son of God—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

In the Apostles' Creed, which we repeat every Lord's Day in the service of our Church, we profess to believe in "*the communion of Saints.*" With thousands this declaration is but a mere form. But, taught by the Holy Spirit, influenced by the constraining love of Christ, our sympathies must and will go out after those who are partakers of a kindred peace and joy, and who are pressing forward to a like glorious home.

And what but this is the lesson of "The Palace Beautiful?" setting forth, as we endeavoured to show in our last reading, the power of association in spiritual things—the conscious union of kindred souls—the loving embrace of hearts tuned to the same music—the communion of happy spirits one in a common hope and in a common Saviour and Lord.

We then considered the loving intercourse which Christian enjoyed with Piety, Prudence, and Charity, the three sisters who dwelt in the Palace Beautiful. We have now to dwell upon what further occurred in this home of peace and love. "Now I saw in my dream that thus they sat talking together until supper was ready. So when they had made ready

they sat down to meat. Now the table was furnished with fat things, and with wine that was well refined; and all their talk at the table was about the Lord of the Hill. Thus they discoursed together till late at night; and after they had committed themselves to their Lord for protection, they betook themselves to rest. The pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sunrising: the name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sung—

“Where am I now? Is this the love and care
Of Jesus, for the men that pilgrims are,
Thus to provide! that I should be forgiven,
And dwell already the next door to heaven?”

After the conversation Christian must have refreshment, and the sisters bring him a table “furnished with fat things, and with wine that was well refined.” Many see in this the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, that sacred feast which is the expression of our gratitude to Christ, and the outward manifestation of our fellowship with each other. It is quite possible Bunyan had this great Christian festival in view, for “*all their talk at the table was about the Lord of the Hill,*” but he does not say such was his design, and surely we may see in the picture presented to us the social intercourse of believers whose bodily refreshment is sanctified by communion on high and holy themes, and who are mindful of the loving assurance of their Master—“where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

And what can better strengthen and refresh a

pilgrim's soul than sweet converse with those who share with him all his joy, sympathise with him in all his conflicts, and long to enter with him into the bliss of the same glorious home? When fellow-pilgrims meet even over a social meal, is it unlikely that their talk will be about the Lord of the Hill—what He has done for them, and how He has provided refreshment for them amid all the toil and weariness of their journey? What sweeter subject of conversation can they have than the triumphs of their great Captain, who on their behalf has fought with and slain him that had the power of death and laid them under perpetual obligation for the display of such surpassing love? And shall they not take pleasure, for each other's encouragement and comfort, in proclaiming the unequalled affection He has for poor pilgrims, the like of which "is not to be found from the east to the west," and the voluntary humility and condescension which could make Him strip himself of his dignity for the sake of those who had nothing but helplessness to recommend them to His mercy? And will they not delight in extolling that goodness which made Him declare that He would not dwell in the mountain of Zion alone, but change the needy from the dunghill into pilgrim-princes to dwell with Him in glory?

These were the subjects of conversation at the supper table; and surely we may see in the picture submitted to us the loving intercourse of believers whose talk is of Jesus, and whose bond of union, stronger than the ties of earth, will outlive the separations of death, and exist firmer and truer still

when, free from a stain of sin or a pang of sorrow, they dwell in the midst of the holy city for ever.

And after all this refreshing conversation the Sisters and Christian joined in family prayer, that precious evidence of a household in which God dwells, and the guest, no doubt, full of joy and gladness at what he had heard, retired to the chamber of Peace, with its window open towards the sunrising, where he slept till the break of day.

My dear reader, would you repose calmly and sweetly in the chamber of Peace, fearful of no disturbing storms, and assured of the perfect safety of both body and soul?—realize sustained communion with Christ, your risen and ascended Lord, and with those who are your brethren and sisters in Him. Here, rest assured, is the source of Peace. Abiding in Christ is the panacea for all human woes. Our frail bark can never founder with the Lord of wind and wave on board. Oh, to reach that state of mind in which saintly Hewitson lived. One who knew him well said of him, “He seemed to have no gaps—no interval in his communion with God. I used to feel, when with him, that it was being with one who was a vine watered every moment.”

This was reposing in the Chamber of Peace, with the window opened towards the sun-rising.

“When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings :
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.”

In the morning the sweet themes of the previous

evening were resumed (for Christians never grow weary of talking of the Lord of the Hill), and the sisters told their guest that "he should not depart till they had showed him the rarities of the place." Let us now accompany them, and gather a little instruction from what our Pilgrim heard and saw. The three places he visited were the Study, the the Museum, and the Observatory.

1. THE STUDY.—Here they showed him the "records of the greatest antiquity." What more forcibly than this can set forth the value and preciousness of Holy Scripture? Here must weary pilgrims go for strength and refreshment on their way. The Bible is no book of yesterday. It contains truly "records of the greatest antiquity." Portions of it were written 3300 years ago, and are a thousand years older than any other history in this world. Between the age of Herodotus and Thucydides, the oldest of profane historians, and that of Moses, the historian of the Pentateuch, a thousand years elapsed, and the poems of Homer and Hesiod are younger by six hundred years than the works of the great Lawgiver of Israel.

Let us thank God for His preservation of this grand old volume, which comes down to us with all the honours of age but with none of its infirmities. It is in our hands as fresh, as pure, as glorious, and as free as when it was breathed into human minds and written as with a pen of iron on the rock for ever. Let us see what Christian learned there for the confirmation of his faith and the refreshment of his

spirit. *Testimony to Christ.* He read over the pedigree of the Lord of the Hill, the Ancient of Days. My young reader, in your reading of the Bible never pass over that long list of names in the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. Those sixteen verses which show you a long line of persons, beginning with Abraham, going on to David, and finishing with Christ, are immensely valuable. And, difficult as they may be fully to understand, bring all the humility of mind you possess to those first five verses with which the Gospel of St. John opens. They declare the "eternal generation" of Jesus Christ. They announce the fact that He was "the Son of the Ancient of Days;" that He was "before all things," and shared the glory of His Father from all eternity.

Again, Christian heard of the wondrous acts of this illustrious One, and the names of hundreds He had taken into His service, and how he had brought them to eternal happiness and glory. But this was not all. The sisters read to him *the deeds of the illustrious dead*. From the Holy Scriptures we see how God has triumphed in His people, how they have come off "more than conquerors" in every conflict, and how every worthy act (worthy by reason of imparted grace) is recorded in the Book of Life to the praise of that love which can know no change for ever. Finally, they directed him to notice *the pledged word of Christ and the sure word of Prophecy*: the first assuring "the chief of sinners" of acceptance, the second inspiring the believer with the conviction that in the end all opposition shall be

overthrown, every foe vanquished, and the weakest of the saints brought to his home of glory. Thus we draw water out of the wells of salvation. He who is oftenest at the fountain-head of truth will the oftenest go on his way rejoicing. Are you, dear readers, frequently in *the Study*? Do you love to pore over the "records of the greatest antiquity?" Is the Bible in your eyes always fresh, always interesting, always new? Here is the secret of all true growth. We shall be healthy, vigorous, and strong in our religious life in the measure in which we drink in the "living water" of God's truth.

2. THE MUSEUM.—Here he may be said to have seen two sets of things—both deeply interesting to him.

Pilgrim Armour.—He saw the equipment which the Lord of the Hill had provided for pilgrims—sword, shield, helmet, breast-plate, all-prayer, and shoes that would not wear out. And how abundant was the provision. There was enough to harness out as many men for the Lord's service as there were stars in the heaven for multitude.

If we are to contend successfully and fight our way to the Celestial City, we must take to ourselves "the whole armour of God." Nothing but the accoutrements of Heaven will do. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the

wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.”—Ephes. vi. 14-17. Thus clad we need not fear the issue of conflict. Fight we must—but victory is sure. There are no joints in this armour which the darts of the wicked one can pierce. Put this armour off, and you are at the mercy of the foe. Keep it on, and you need not fear.

“Fight, nor think the battle long ;
Soon shall victory crown your song.”

And in the Museum Christian saw

The relics of mighty deeds.—“They showed him Moses’ rod ; the hammer and nail with which Jael slew Sisera ; the pitchers, trumpets, and lamps too, with which Gideon put to flight the armies of Midian. Then they showed him the ox-goad wherewith Shamgar slew six hundred men. They showed him also the jaw-bone with which Samson did such mighty feats. They showed him moreover the sling and stone with which David slew Goliath of Gath ; and the sword with which the Lord will ‘kill the man of sin’ in the day that he will rise up to the prey.”

This was the work of another day. After seeing many more excellent things, with which Christian was much delighted, all went to their rest again.

And what might Christian learn and what may we learn from these relics of mighty deeds? Certainly not as the Church of Rome would teach us, to worship them. Let us read in them the fact that the Christian’s victory does not depend upon himself, but on the power of the omnipotent God. The sling and

stone were far more in David's hand than Saul's armour would have been upon his person. It was this which made the apostolic band more than a match for the power of Greece and Rome. It was this that made a poor weak Monk stronger than a Pope, and won the battle of the Reformation.

"It is with swords and bows, with javelins and bombs that we must crush the fury of the devil," wrote the chivalrous Ulric of Hutton to Martin Luther. Luther wrote back, "I will not have recourse to arms and blood in defence of the Gospel. By the Word the earth has been subdued; by the Word the Church has been saved; and by the Word also it shall be re-established."

This was the great lesson Christian learned in the Armoury. Let this truth be one of the foundation-stones of our confidence. Here is the secret of all that wonderful success which has attended the preaching of the Crucified One as the only Saviour of mankind. There is no power in the messenger—it is altogether in the message. The earthen vessel is weak enough: the strength is altogether in the Truth contained in it. In the triumphs of His people God will have all the glory. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."—Zech. iv. 6.

3.—THE OBSERVATORY.—Christian waited another day still at the Palace Beautiful, under the promise that on the morrow, if clear, he should see the *Delectable Mountains*.

From the top of the house he was permitted to

enjoy the sight of Immanuel's Land, a long way off, but so near to the end of his journey that from it could be seen the gate of the Celestial City.

Dear readers, there are many of us who might get a view of this "goodly land." The day must be clear. It is only when our faith is strong we can enjoy this privilege.

But there have been saints who have gazed on these woods and vineyards and fruits and flowers that Christian saw. And I believe there are not a few now. Oh that we could ever be looking out on to Immanuel's Land, that happy stage in our spiritual history when every fear and doubt will be gone, and the eye of faith, with no cloud to intercept its vision, will rest on the gate of the Celestial City as we enjoy a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven.

"Oh ! could we make our doubts remove—
Those gloomy doubts that rise—
And see the Canaan that we love
With unclouded eyes.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er ;
Not Jordan's streams, nor Death's cold flood
Should fright us from the shore."

Now Christian must depart. But he has to pay another visit to the Armoury. There the Sisters harnessed him in a complete suit, and, clad like a true pilgrim-soldier, he proceeded to the gate. He inquired of the Porter if he had observed any pilgrims pass by. Watchful then told him he had seen *Faithful*, Christian's townsman and near neighbour, who had probably reached the top of the hill. Then

Christian went forward, but not quite alone, for Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence accompanied him to the foot of the hill. They went on together, "reiterating their former discourses"—that is, talking again about the Lord of the Hill, till they began to descend.

"Then," said Christian, "as it was *difficult* coming up, so far as I can see, it is *dangerous* going down."

Prudence told him it was a hard matter for a man to go down into the Valley of Humiliation and catch no slip by the way, and for this reason she and her sisters had gone so far with him. "So he began to go down, but very warily, yet he caught a slip or two."

"Then," says the Dreamer, "I saw in my dream, that these good companions, when Christian was gone down to the bottom of the hill, gave him a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and a cluster of raisins, and then he went on his way."

Thus, brethren, goodness and mercy follow us. We cannot always dwell in the Palace Beautiful. We must descend into the Valley of Humiliation, but there are those who shall bear us company. Clad in "the whole armour of God"—accompanied by those divine graces and virtues which are the provision of our loving Father in Heaven—though we may slip we shall not fall, but accomplish our journey from stage to stage, going on our way rejoicing.

Let our subject serve to encourage every Christian among us. We remember with what weakness our Pilgrim entered the Palace; we now

see him leave it like a giant refreshed. Let us, like him, love to talk about the Lord of the Hill. Let us go forward strong in imparted strength. The descent may be steep, but we shall get no harm. Our foot may slip, but there is One who will hold us up. Let us not fear. Christian warriors must conquer at the last, and, trampling upon every foe, in due time reach the glorious "things which God hath prepared for those that love Him."

"Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son.

Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror

Stand, then, in His great might,
With all His strength endued ;
But take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.

That having all things done,
And all your conflicts pass'd
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand entire at last."



FOURTEENTH DAY.

THE GREAT ADVERSARY.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
JAMES iv. 7.

NOTICE where Christian was at this time. He was in *The Valley of Humiliation*. We cannot always dwell in the Palace Beautiful enjoying the Communion of Saints. Christian experience has many changes in it. Sometimes we are enveloped in sunshine—sometimes in cloud. Sometimes we are on the top of the hill—sometimes down in the valley. Sometimes we leap with joy—sometimes we sit down in sorrow; and so it is, until we reach the better land, where the sun ever shines and the shadows never fall, and perfect love and perfect peace become our portion for ever. It was so with Christian. Last week we had him in the *Palace Beautiful*, now we have him in *the Valley of Humiliation*. But he has provision for the way. He is clad in armour which the fair sisters had put upon him. He has the loaf of bread, the bottle of wine, and the cluster of raisins they had given him. Thus amidst all our changes, “the Lord will provide.” He does not leave us comfortless. He knows what we are, and all the dangers that await us, and He will give us strength equal to our

day. Let God's people feel sure of this. There may be many doubts on the way, but there need be no doubt about the end. There is *no* promise of freedom from all conflict, but there *is* the promise of sure victory at last. How happy would it make us fully to realize this. The cause of all our depression and dread is the fact that we only touch Christ when we ought to cling to him. The spirit which rises superior to every disaster and triumphs in every field is that which Job had when he said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." Dear reader, pray for strong faith. Well has one said, "If we would be Christian larks and not Christian owls, seek to have more faith; if we would mount in sunshine, and carol like the bird of day, then seek strong confidence."

"Let not fears your course impede,
Great your strength, if great your need."

"But now, in this Valley of Humiliation, poor Christian was hard put to it; for he had gone but a little way before he espied a foul fiend coming over a field to meet him—his name was Apollyon. Then did Christian begin to be afraid, and to cast in his mind whether to go back or stand his ground. But he considered again that he had no armour for his back, and therefore thought that to turn the back to him might give him greater advantage with ease to pierce him with his darts, therefore he resolved to venture and stand his ground; for, thought he, had I no more in mine eye than the saving of my life, it would be the best way to stand."

How soon had things changed with Christian.

Instead of sweet converse with Discretion, Piety, Charity, and Prudence, he has to meet the foul fiend, the angel of the bottomless pit, Apollyon, the Destroyer.—Rev. ix. 11. Thus is the Christian, like his divine Lord was before him, subject to the attacks of the great adversary, and roaring lion, which goeth about seeking whom he may devour. This will explain many a sad hour in the believer's spiritual history. Here is the solution of all those perplexing thoughts, distressing doubts, and sinful imaginings which rob him so often of his peace. He is in the Valley of Humiliation and Apollyon is in the way. And such times are great trials of faith. We scarcely know whether to go back or stand our ground. But He who suffers us to doubt does not suffer us to turn back. He may permit us even to fall, but never—never will he see us conquered in the end. And observe the considerations which weighed with Christian. He remembered that he had no armour for his back. To turn, therefore, would have made him an easy prey for his enemy. Has this fact ever struck you that in the “whole armour of God,” enumerated in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, there is no mention of any defence for the back? There is the girding for the loins, the preparation for the feet, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, but nothing for the back. There is no provision for cowardice—none for a retreat. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all *to stand*.” The enemy must see a

full front—the watchword must be “forward ;” there must be no turning round. “*He had no armour for his back.*”

My dear readers, we must bear this in mind. “*Resist the Devil.*” Nothing but direct and uncompromising resistance will do. To parley is to fall, to turn is to perish, to fight alone is to conquer. “*Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.*” We now come to the wonderful picture which, as a description of a believer in deadly conflict with the powers of darkness, has probably never been equalled.

Let us divide our remarks in this way :—

1. THE ENEMY.
2. THE BATTLE.
3. THE VICTORY.

1. THE ENEMY.—It will be well for us to remember that we are dealing with an allegory. We must not suppose that as an actual fact our great Adversary is such a being as Bunyan has so wonderfully described. St. Peter did not mean us to suppose he was a lion, and neither are we to imagine that in reality he is anything like this foul fiend Apollyon. The language is altogether figurative, describing character rather than person. Let us look at it.

“Now the monster was hideous to behold ; he was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride) ; he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question him.”

Every word of this as a description of Satan, our great Adversary, is true to Scripture. We see in it *subtlety*. The “scales remind us that he is “that old serpent called the Devil.”—Rev. xii. 9. We see in it *rapidity of motion*. “The wings like a dragon” recall to us the fact that he is the active spirit of evil. “going to and fro in the earth,” whose bitter enmity to souls never slumbers and never sleeps. We see in it *terrible insidiousness and gigantic strength*. The “feet like a bear” bring to us his noiseless tread and unsuspected modes of attack, and the power by which he strikes down his poor victims and carries them away “captive at his will.” We see in it *malignity and hatred*. The “fire and smoke” tell us of that spirit of malice and mischief which fills the breast of our great adversary and keeps him ever at one work, ruining immortal souls and dragging them to hell. It tells us of *a hunger for inquiry never satisfied*. The “mouth as the mouth of a lion” reminds us of our “adversary the devil,” who as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” This was the bitter and relentless foe who met Christian in the valley, and he lives and labours still. He who tried Job, deceived David, and gave Peter the great sorrow of his life, is as busy, as active, as energetic as ever. He is not always “the foul fiend.” He is far oftener “the angel of light.” He has as many forms as Proteus—as many colours as the chameleon. Backed by the experience of six thousand years he knows all about human hearts—all the weak points and underground passages—and leads thousands “captive at his will.”

And how desperately he tries the Believer. Many a Christian has to meet him in the Valley. Sore conflicts have God's people to wage with their great Adversary.

Let us then ever be mindful of his existence. He is no mere creature of the imagination. He is a real being possessed of immense powers and always about us wherever we are. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Three times did Satan tempt Christ. Times without number he has tempted Christians. Let us not be surprised if we find him in our path. Only one course is open to us. We must neither parley nor fly. "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*"

2. THE BATTLE.—I must ask you to read the account of it at your leisure. All I can do is to point out certain things which may enable you the better to understand it.

The attack of Apollyon was eminently characteristic of Satan, our great adversary, and is full of instruction.

The first step was a *disdainful inquiry*. "Whence come you? and whither are you bound?" Christian replied, "I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion." The second step was a *bold demand*. Apollyon at once claimed him as one of his subjects, and sternly declared but for the hope of his doing him more service he would have struck him as a deserter to the ground. Christian acknowledged he was once his subject, but that he found his wages

such as no man could live on, therefore as a considerate person he had looked out to mend himself. The third step was *an expressed resolve to have his own*. Apollyon said, "There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee." The fourth step was *a coaxing promise*—"but since thou complainest of thy service and wages be content to go back, what our country will afford I do here promise to give thee."

Christian replied that he was pledged to another, "even to the King of princes." The fifth step was "*a specious insinuation*."

Apollyon told Christian he had "changed a bad for a worse," and he added, "but it is ordinary for these that have professed themselves his servants, after a while to give him the slip and return again to me. Do thou so, too, and all shall be well."

Christian could not be moved. He told his wily foe that he had confidence in his Prince, and believed that he would absolve him from all past sinful compliances, and, further, that he preferred His service, wages, servants, government, company, and country, boldly adding, "therefore leave off to persuade me further: I am His servant and I will follow Him." The sixth and last step was a series of *malicious accusations*. Apollyon bade Christian consider how many of the servants of his Prince had been put to shameless deaths and never been delivered, and how *he*, on the contrary, had many times delivered either by power or fraud those who had faithfully served him. Christian replied that his Prince permitted such things to happen only to try

the love of His servants, and as for the ill-end of which he spoke it was "most glorious on their account," for they wait for their good things to come, "when their Prince comes in his and the glory of the angels." Apollyon then accuses Christian of unfaithfulness, even to his new master, reminding him of the gulf of Despond, his efforts to get rid of his burden, his sinful sleep, the loss of his roll, his fear of the lions, and his vain-glory in telling his experience at the Palace Beautiful.

Christian meekly owned to all this, but he declared, "The Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful and ready to forgive."

Then Apollyon threw away his mask. Christian in act if not in word had defied him. Apollyon "broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy of this Prince; I hate his person, his laws, and people. I am come out on purpose to withstand thee."

The Christian warrior boldly answered, "Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the King's highway; the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself."

Apollyon then filled "the whole breadth of the way" and said, "I am void of fear in this matter; prepare thyself to die; for, I swear by my infernal den that thou shalt go no further: here will I spill thy soul."

How wonderfully does Bunyan describe the battle—how Christian caught Apollyon's dart upon his shield, how he drew his sword but received wounds in his head, hand, and foot—how Apollyon

pressed on him, and how, fighting for half a day, Christian by reason of his wounds grew weaker and weaker—how Apollyon espying his opportunity gathered up close to Christian and gave him such a fall that his sword flew out of his hand—how the fiend made sure of his victim, and Christian, just as the last blow was descending upon him, caught his sword and gave his enemy a deadly thrust—and how, perceiving that, he made at him again, saying “Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” and how Apollyon spread forth his dragon’s wings and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more.

This was the battle. It is not that all have such a conflict with the powers of darkness. It is probable that Bunyan described a portion of his own history, but it is quite possible he has described no portion of yours or mine. But there are those who have passed through scenes as terrible as this, and men like St. Paul and Luther have, like Christian, had to tell how they met, fought, and conquered Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation. But though our circumstances may not have closely resembled those so vividly described by Bunyan, there are none of us who have not had to deal with the spiritual adversary of our souls. Oh, how craftily and warily does he attack men. He is a master of deceit and subtlety. He can wear the look of scorn, but he knows how to use the lip of honey. What he fails to do by force he will often accomplish by fraud. He is the great cause of millions losing their souls and dying in their sins. He is at the bottom of all

the discord, mischief, heresy, and superstition of the world. He divides Churches—separates Christians—robs believers of their comforts—embitters families by strife—quotes Scripture when it suits his purpose—works unseen and never dies—the bitter, malignant, unceasing foe of both God and man. Nobly and valiantly did Christian meet him. Every fresh attack only served to add fire to his courage. He refused his service, declared his allegiance to the Prince under whose banner he stood, and unmoved either by the deceiver's promises or his account of the apostacy of others, he braved him to deadly conflict and finally drove him from the field.

My dear readers, as Christian warriors take care your armour is bright and your weapon ready. Let it be a settled conviction in your mind that there is such a being as the Devil, and that he is never far from you. There is no sin in meeting him—the sin is in yielding to him. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil.” Look for the battle but never doubt the issue. Wounded you *may* be, but vanquished you *cannot* be. Falling you shall rise, and, giving the “deadly thrust” with a strength better than your own, you shall sing the song of triumph—“In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”

3. THE VICTORY.—See *when* it came—just when Christian “began to despair of life.” See *how* it came—it was “as God would have it.” See *how*

it was received. Sighs and groans came from Christian's heart during the combat. He had not "so much as one pleasant look;" but when he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword, "then, indeed, he did *smile and look upward.*" A hymn of gratitude to God went up from his rejoicing heart.

"Therefore to Him let me give lasting praise,
And thank and bless His holy name always."

Thus sweetly does the Dreamer close his chapter. "Then there came to him a hand with some of the leaves of 'the tree of life,' the which Christian took, and applied to the wounds that he had received in the battle, and was healed immediately. He also sat down in that place to eat bread, and to drink of that bottle that was given him a little before: so being refreshed he addressed himself to his journey with his sword drawn in his hand; for he said, I know not but some other enemy may be at hand. But he met with no other affront from Apollyon quite through this valley."

Thus do we fight and thus we conquer. We are wounded in the conflict like Job, and David, and Peter, but our wounds are healed, our comforts are restored, we have "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." And we come out of the battle the better trained as soldiers of the Cross. When Christian left the Palace Beautiful he had his sword in his scabbard, but after the fight with Apollyon he carried it in his hand. He had learned where his strength was, not in the power of his arm, but in the help of his God.

Thus, let it be with you. Be watchful; be ready. "*Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.*" Let your confidence be in Christ, who will never suffer you to be tempted beyond that ye are able. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword." "It is written," is more than a match for our spiritual adversary.

Weary and faint you *may* be, but conquered and destroyed you shall *never* be. The song of praise shall go up from the storm-beaten but rejoicing heart. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

"Immoveable our hope remains ;
Within the veil our anchor lies ;
Jesus, who washed us from our stains,
Shall bear us safely to the skies.

Strong in his strength, we boldly say,
For us Immanuel shed his blood ;
Who then shall tear our shield away,
Or part us from the love of God ?

Can tribulation or distress,
Or persecution's fiery sword ?
Or Satan rob us of our peace,
Or prove too mighty for the Lord ?

Founded on Christ, secure we stand,
Sealed with His Spirit's inward seal ;
We soon shall gain the promis'd land,
Triumphant o'er the powers of hell.

The winds may roar, the floods beset,
And rains impetuous descend ;
Yet will He not His own forget,
But love, and save them to the end.'

FIFTEENTH DAY.

THE DARK VALLEY.

“For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.”—PSALM cxliii. 3.

THESE are the words of holy David. Subjected to the bitter enmity of Saul, he was cast down in spirit. Conscious of his innocence and integrity, he was deeply distressed at a malice which nothing but his destruction could satisfy. Darkness gathered over his soul. “Vain is the help of man,” was his conviction and his cry. At that hour he turned to God. “Hear my prayer, O Lord.”

How sweet a theme does this suggest to us—the Godward tendency of the devout soul in trouble. The worldling seeks refuge in the pleasures of gaiety, or in the companionship of friends, or in occupations which may serve to divert the mind; but the believer turns to the everlasting hills for help.

It was so with Christ when in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed three times, “O my Father.”

And it has been so with believers in every age. They have been drawn like their Redeemer—man-ward. They have sought the counsel and comfort which sympathizing hearts could give them. But they too have found that, however willing the spirit has been, the flesh has been weak. Their only sure refuge has been God. Here was One not only ready to hear, but also mighty to save. Here was One who would be deterred by no suspicions, but whose wisdom, power, and love were equal, and all upon the side of His believing people. It is to this the Lord would ever bring us. There is much in His appointments we cannot understand—much in His web we cannot unravel—but we may be sure His design is to lead us to Himself, to establish us in a faith which has no foothold but in Christ, to make us see that the creatures of the world are weak and the waters of the world are bitter, and all to the end that we should enjoy the sweetness of divine promises and find all we need in a covenant-keeping God. And these remarks will bring us once more to our Pilgrim who, triumphant over Apollyon, healed of his wounds by the leaves of the “tree of life,” and refreshed with the provisions he had received from the fair sisters of the Palace Beautiful, “addressed himself to his journey with his sword in his hand.” Let us now take up the story.

“Now at the end of this valley was another called the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Christian must needs go through it, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it. Now this valley is a very solitary place. The prophet

Jeremiah thus describes it : ‘ a wilderness ; a land of deserts and pits ; a land of drought, and of the *shadow of death* ; a land that no man (but a Christian) passed through, and where no man dwelt.’ ”

Here we are told Christian “ was worse put to it than in his fight with Apollyon.” Reaching the borders of the Shadow of Death he met two men who, like the spies of old, brought up only evil report of the good land and were making haste to go back. Christian asked them, “ Whither are you going ? ” They answered, “ Back ! back ! and we would have you do so too if either life or peace is prized by you.” In answer to further inquiries the men told Christian what they had seen and heard at the entrance of the valley.

“ Seen ! ” said they, “ Why, the valley itself, which is as dark as pitch : we also saw there the hobgoblins, satyrs, and dragons of the pit ; we heard also in that valley continual howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who were sat bound in affliction and iron ; and over that valley hang the discouraging clouds of confusion ; death also does always spread his wings over it. In a word it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order.”

There was nothing in this account, terrible as it was, to make Christian suppose he was out of his way.

They parted—the men saying, “ Be it thy way ; we will not choose it for ours,”—Christian, grasping his sword, and pursuing his journey.

Then follows a description of the dangers of the way. As Christian reached the Valley the Dreamer

saw on the right hand a very deep ditch into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and where both have perished. On the left was a dangerous quag into which even the good man, like King David, may fall.

The pathway between the ditch and the quag was very narrow, and so dark that Christian had the greatest difficulty to avoid falling into one of them. Hard by the way side he perceived the mouth of Hell, and as he thought "What shall I do?" ever and anon smoke and flame came out with sparks and hideous noises, things which cared not for his sword, so he was forced to put it by and betake himself to another weapon, called *All-prayer*, so he cried, O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul!"

Horrors seemed to thicken the further he went. The flames would be reaching him, and he heard doleful voices and rushings to and fro, so that he thought he should be torn in pieces, or trodden down like the mire in the streets. All this was seen and heard for several miles together. He fancied he heard a company of fiends coming to meet him, and he began to muse what he had best to do. Sometimes he had half resolved to go back, but he thought he might be half through the valley; moreover, he remembered how he had vanquished many a danger, and that to go back might be more perilous than to go forward. So he went on, and as the fiends seemed to come nearer, he cried, "I will walk in the strength of the Lord God," and at this they gave back and came no further. The Dreamer tells us he took notice that poor Christian was so confounded

he did not know his own voice. Just as he came against the burning pit one of the wicked ones got behind him and whispered grievous blasphemies to him. This was more trying than anything he had met before, because he thought it came from his own mind ; but, at last, as he travelled in this disconsolate condition, he thought he heard the voice of a man, as going before him, saying, " Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me." Beautifully does the Dreamer add :

" Then was he glad, and for three reasons—first, because he gathered from thence that some who feared God were in this valley as well as himself ; secondly, for that he perceived God was with him, though in that dark and dismal state ; and why not, thought he, with me, though by reason of the impediment that attends this place I cannot perceive it ; thirdly, for that he hoped (could he overtake them) to have company by-and-by. So he went on, and called to him that was before : but he knew not what to answer ; for that he also thought himself to be alone. And by-and-by the day broke : then said Christian, " He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning."

As the morning came in he saw more perfectly all the dangers of the way, and the rising of the sun is recorded as a special mercy ; for, although the first part of the Valley of the Shadow of Death was dangerous, yet the second part was far more so, and but for the light he would have never seen the snares, traps, gins, and nets ; nor the pits, pitfalls, deep

holes, and shelvings which were in the valley, and so, had he had a thousand souls, they had in reason been best cast away. "But," says the Dreamer, "as I said just now, the sun was rising. Then, said he, 'His candle shineth on my head, and by His light I go through darkness.' In this light, therefore, he came to the end of the valley." Now, what does all this mean, and what is the instruction it is intended to convey to us? Let us look again at our text—"For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead."

David was at that time dwelling in darkness. It was the hour of conflict with him. Let, then, the Valley of the Shadow of Death and the case of the distressed servant of God suggest to us a chapter in Christian experience.

1. IT HAS ITS DARK AS WELL AS ITS BRIGHT DAYS.

2. AT SUCH TIMES ONLY ONE WEAPON WILL BE FOUND TO BE EFFECTUAL.

3. WE MAY BE ASSURED DELIVERANCE WILL COME AT LAST.

1. IT HAS ITS DARK AS WELL AS ITS BRIGHT DAYS.—There are bright days—days which we spend in the Palace Beautiful, when we can see the Delectable Mountains and enjoy sweet converse with fellow-pilgrims on the road to the same glorious home. Oh, what precious times are those when all

is sunshine, when no shadows are about us, and when we know the tenderness of Jesus so perfectly, and the love of the Father so fully, that not a care interferes with our peace, nor a doubt disturbs our joy. Believers have such days. It is their Lord's desire that they should have many.

How brief but expressive is that record of the disciples immediately after the ascension of Christ—"And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God." And how pure and holy would that joy be which filled the Philippian gaoler's heart—"And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and *rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house."

Let us, then, be quite certain that believers have their bright days—days when the sun shines, the flowers bloom, the birds sing, and the streams flow—days when they feel their feet firm, their faith true, and their crown sure. Such are bright days. God grant us many such. But "some days must be dark and dreary." There are many clouds in the experience of the Lord's people. These are days when gloom settles over the heart, and they cry, "We walk in darkness and have no light." There are some, indeed, who, like *Faithful*, escape both the Valley of Humiliation and the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but there are many who, like Christian, have to pass through them both.

One of these dark and awful seasons of Christian experience we have in the portion of our history under consideration to-day.

The valley of the Shadow of Death is intended to set forth a time of doubt and despair, such as that through which Bunyan himself passed, described in "Grace abounding." The record of that period of his life is terrible in the extreme. He was plunged into the very depths of anguish. Thick darkness, such that might be felt, encompassed him. He saw not a single glimmer of light in that great cloud that shut out God from his soul; not a hope could he cherish, not a promise could he touch, not a joy could he feel. He says, "I fell, therefore, at the sight of my own vileness, deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition that I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God; sure I am given to the devil and to a reprobate mind. And thus I continued a long while, even for some years together." And perhaps another passage from the autobiography may make the fact of Bunyan's allusion to his own history still clearer. "For about the space of a month after, a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before; it came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another; first, all my comfort was taken from me, then darkness seized upon me; after which, whole floods of blasphemies against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, were poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous thoughts were such as also stirred up questions in me against the very being of God and of His only beloved Son; or whether there were in truth a God, or Christ, or no." Are there those who call this the

raving of religious madness? Ah, be thankful, indeed, if with Faithful you can say, "I had sunshine all the rest of the way through that and also through the Valley of the Shadow of Death;" but if you have any doubt about these dark hours of which we are speaking, ask such men as David, Bunyan, Cowper, John Newton, and others, who have dwelt in darkness, and who, through much tribulation, have entered the kingdom of God.

And as there are degrees of sunshine, so there are degrees of cloud. Our experience may not be so terrible as that recorded in our passage, but can we tell of no shadows that have dimmed our joys, of no sad thoughts which have chased peace out of our hearts? Have not we who but yesterday were on the hill-top found ourselves to-day in the valley? Is it long since we said, "Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong," and yet in distress and darkness we now cry, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" To-day perhaps we sing:—

"Begone, unbelief! my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear;
By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform,
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm."

How do you know to-morrow we shall not sing:

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causeth anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?"

Let us, dear reader, look for these dark days. The unbelieving, like the men Christian met, mis-

taking excitement for religion, may reach the borders of the valley, and bring us sad news of the dangers of the way, but let us not fear.

Let us gather lessons from the lives of such men as David, and Job, and Hezekiah, and Peter, and Paul, and many of the bravest, truest, and best men and women who have ever lived; and though darkness surround us, and the spirits of the bottomless pit assail us, let us go forward with the faith of the crushed but conquering patriarch—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

2. AT SUCH TIMES ONLY ONE WEAPON WILL BE FOUND TO BE EFFECTUAL.—These seasons must be met with weapons which are inward and spiritual. The sword which vanquished Apollyon is sheathed, and Christian grasps that of *All-prayer*. What but this could have kept him in the middle path? There was the deep ditch of presumption on the one side, and the dangerous quag of desperation on the other side. Oh! how needful to steer our way between these, along the pathway "exceeding narrow," but most surely leading to the Celestial City! There is but one weapon for the Valley of the Shadow of Death—the weapon of *All-prayer*. There are dark nights of temptation which may gather over us and make our faith tremble like a flickering spark. There are thick clouds of doubt which may stretch themselves between us and God, and rob us of every comfort we possess. But our weapon must be *Prayer*—prayer to God, prayer through Christ, prayer for the Spirit. Our path must be straightforward, and

as we press on we must pray on, driving back each foe with the power of prevailing petition, weak in ourselves, but strong in God, crying, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

See then, my dear reader, your resource in the season of spiritual depression. Your cup will not always run over. There are times when the sun will go down behind the hill. It may be sharp conflict will become your portion. See your refuge—*All-prayer*. Go straight to God. Here is your shield, your anchor, your covert, your strength. However deep your misgiving, however terrible your doubt, however fearful your experience, cast it all on Him, pleading His promises, leaning on His love, and remembering your great High Priest who is before the throne. Oh, how God's people, depressed and troubled, should rejoice in this. There is no promise of perpetual sunshine, but there is the promise of unfailing help. There is no promise that they shall always be on the hill, but there is the promise of God's presence with them in the valley.

With this conviction let us go forward. The incense of the depressed and stricken heart is always acceptable to God.

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me !"

3. WE MAY BE ASSURED THAT DELIVERANCE WILL COME AT LAST.—There is not one of us who may not have to say with holy David, "the enemy

hath persecuted my soul ; he hath smitten my life down to the ground ; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead ;” but if we are God’s people, we shall sing all in good time, “songs of deliverance.” Christian, though surrounded by horrors, was not left without encouragement. He heard the voice of a man, as going before him, saying, “Though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me.” He comforted himself with the thought that some who feared God were in the valley as well as himself ; further, that dismal as his state was God was with him ; and, lastly, that he should have comfort by-and-by. And as the morning broke he saw how great had been the dangers he had escaped, and how true was that passage—“He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.”

The sunrise, moreover, exposed the perils of the way before him, and brought the language of Job to his lips—“His candle shineth on my head, and by His light I go through darkness.” Thus he recognised the merciful deliverance of God, and it is added, “In this light, therefore, he came to the end of the valley.”

God delights in the people of His love. It may be that in His providence they shall have many dangers to meet and many difficulties to surmount, but they shall never want either His loving heart or His helping hand. He may bring them into great straits, break up many of their tenderest ties, reduce their spiritual joy to a low ebb, but cast them down

as He may, He will never cast them off. There may be much they cannot understand, much that very often perplexes them, but behind all there is a wisdom which can never falter and a love which can never fail, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Hence it is, deliverance is sure. It may be in the confounding of our enemies and our triumph in this life, or it may be in the gift of the martyr-spirit which secures our triumph in death—but we are more than conquerors" in the end. And let us not permit a single doubt respecting the issue of our conflict to gain possession of our minds. United to Jesus every believer is, and must be, victorious. We conquer because Christ conquered.

Oh then, dear reader, though you may "dwell in darkness," never fear—"joy cometh in the morning." Seasons of depression are seasons of special mercy. They are really the times when God draws nearer to us. Difficulties are in truth the best teachers we have. But, wielding with a cheerful heart the weapon of All-prayer, going forward gathering like the oak strength from the storm, the night of weeping will make way for the morning of joy, and we shall reach that glorious land where the Sun of Righteousness shines without a cloud for ever.

"Why walk in darkness? Has the dear light vanished
That gave us joy and day?
Has the great Sun departed? Has sin banished
His life-giving ray?

Light of the world! for ever, ever shining
There is no change in Thee;
True light of life, all joy and health enshrining,
Thou canst not fade nor flee.

Thou hast arisen ; but Thou descendest never ;
To-day shines as the past ;
All that thou wast, or art, and shall be ever,
Brightness from first to last !

Night visits not Thy sky, nor storm, nor sadness ;
Day fills up all its blue ;
Unfailing beauty, and unfaltering gladness,
And love for ever new !

Why walk in darkness ? Our true light yet shineth
It is not night, but day !
All healing, and all peace his light enshrineth
Why shun his loving ray ?

Are night and shadows better, truer, dearer,
Than day and joy and love ?
Do tremblings and misgivings bring us nearer
To the great God of love ?

Light of the world ! undimming and unsetting,
O shine each mist away !
Banish the fear, the falsehood, and the fretting :
Be our unchanging day !"



SIXTEENTH DAY.

GIANTS POPE AND PAGAN.

“Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”—REV. xvii. 6.

AS the portion of our allegory which is to occupy us to-day is short, I will quote it. “Now I saw in my dream that at the end of this valley (the Valley of the Shadow of Death) lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and, while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time; by whose power and tyranny the men whose bones, blood, ashes, &c., lay there were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learnt since, that Pagan has been dead many a day; and, as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can do little more than sit in his cave’s mouth grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and

biting his nails because he cannot come at them. So I saw that Christian went on his way ; yet at the sight of the old man that sat in the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think ; specially because he spake to him, though he could not go after him, saying, you will never mend till more of you be burned. But he held his peace, and set a good face on it, and so went by and caught no hurt."

Let us now get some instruction from this striking picture. The first thing to which I would draw your attention is—

1. THE TWO GIANTS WERE FORMERLY TOGETHER.—Pope and Pagan in old time dwelt in the same cave. This portion of the picture shows how thoroughly Bunyan knew the true nature and character of Popery. Well has a writer said, "Popery and Paganism are two incarnations of depravity wonderfully similar, almost the same ; but Popery has, by far, the greatest dominion of the blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of pilgrims."

The fact is, the Church of Rome is heavily in debt to Pagan antiquity. Her ancestry is far more Pagan than Christian. The two giants formerly lived together. This is an interesting point, and it may be well to support my assertion by one example. Let us take the doctrine of *Purgatory*. What is Purgatory ? This must be gathered from the "Catechism of the Council of Trent," where we read—"There is besides (that is beside Gehenna or hell) a Purgatorial fire, in which the souls of the pious,

having been tortured for a limited time, are expiated, in order that an entrance into the eternal country may be opened to them, into which nothing defiled enters.”

I do not stop to show you that this is as absurd as it is unscriptural. But where is the birthplace of the doctrine? It certainly is not Christian, for there is not a shadow of support for it in the Bible; it must therefore be Pagan, and this I affirm to be the case. It is a heathen superstition, and an exact pattern of it is to be found in the Sixth Book of the *Æneid* of Virgil. I give you Dryden’s translation. If this is not Purgatory we may ask the Romanist to tell us what it is.

“For this are various penances enjoined;
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;
Some plunged in waters, others purged in fires,
Till all the dregs are drained, and all the rust expires.
All have their manés, and these manés bear:
The few so cleansed, to these abodes repair,
And breathe in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
Then are they happy, when, by length of time,
The scurf is worn away of each committed crime:
No speck is left of their habitual stains,
But the pure ether of the soul remains.”

Could any language better describe the Romish doctrine of Purgatory? There it is in the pages of the great heathen poet who died about twenty years before Christ was born. Neander conceives that Purgatory had its source in the ancient Persian doctrine of a purifying conflagration which was to precede the victory of Ormuz, and consume everything that was impure.

We see therefore that its birthplace was

Paganism. The two giants, Pope and Pagan, may well have lived together in old time.

We cannot be too thankful for being members of a Church which in its sixth Article declares "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation;" in its twenty-second Article "The Romish Doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God;" and in its thirty-seventh Article "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England." Well would it have been for us if our rulers had acted consistently with the spirit of the Reformed Church of our land. The protest of the Church of England against the baptised Paganism of Rome is so strong and clear that nothing but the most palpable dishonesty can evade it.

The Christianity which Christ and his apostles preached borrowed nothing from Paganism.

It may suit Popery to imitate the corrupt practices of the heathen, substituting tinselled statues of the Virgin and saints for the bedecked gods of the poor Hindoo, but the religion of Jesus Christ, pure as its divine Author, refuses a place in the Pantheon, and demands the renouncement of every other faith as blasphemous, unscriptural, and untrue. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin" is the voice of Christianity; "I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful" is the voice of

the Church of Rome. The first is taken from God's inspired Word, the second from Pagan antiquity.

Well might Bunyan tell us of the cave where the two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time.

2. THE TWO GIANTS WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POWER AND TYRANNY OF THE PAST.—The bones, blood, and ashes which lay about the cave were those of the men who had been cruelly put to death by Pope and Pagan.

We need not study history much to discover that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." We have all read something of the revolting practices of the heathen, their disregard of human life, and their degraded notions of what the Deity requires at our hands. We know, too, how Roman emperors, like Nero and Domitian, have endeavoured to trample out the truth of Christianity, when such men as Ignatius have been flung to the wild beasts and such men as Polycarp to the flames, and fire and sword have been the portion of the lowly followers of Jesus.

But Bunyan seems to speak only of the Paganism of England. He tells us "*that Pagan has been dead many a day.*" And thankful indeed should we be for the change our country has seen. Time was when the entire population was ruled by the terrors of religion, when the most idolatrous and revolting worship prevailed, of which human sacrifices were the most terrible feature, and the whole land was subjected to a tyranny the most relentless and dreadful probably ever felt.

But "*Pagan has been dead many a day.*" Christianity has conquered. It has done much in the way of abolishing the horrible practices of heathenism in the world at large, and but for the temporising policy of statesmen who have had no faith in their own creed, it would have done more. There is not an idol temple in all Europe. There is much fraud, falsehood, and deception; there are terrible things said and done in the name of religion; the holy faith which Christ preached is fearfully caricatured; but avowedly only the one living and true God is worshipped and adored. None can question, account for it as we may, that Christianity has triumphed. "*Pagan has been dead many a day.*" But, although the altars of our Pagan ancestors are gone; though the impious rites of our Saxon forefathers are preserved to us only in history, and we retain a remembrance of them only in the names of our week-days, we cannot say as much of the other Giant, the second representative of the power and tyranny of the Past. If Pagan has slain his thousands, Pope has slain his tens of thousands. "Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Pope is "yet alive." Truly he is not what he was. He is shorn very much of his strength. He has "grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them." But he is "yet alive." The world has gone forward and left him behind. The progress of Gospel truth and civilisation has done much to make the old man

little better than a relic of a dark and dreadful Past. But the spirit which trampled on the rights and liberties of men, which lighted the fires of Oxford and Smithfield, padlocked the Bible, hid the Cross, and shed the blood of some of the noblest, truest, and bravest men and women that ever lived, remains. It is precisely the same. It has known no change. It has withdrawn no claim to supremacy. Giant Pope in his cave sits biting his nails with the vexing thought that so much of his strength is gone, but he cries after Christian, "*You will never mend till more of you be burned.*" In other words, he only wants the power to enforce his demands.

Those "shrewd brushes" which Giant Pope received were inflicted when Wickliffe shook England to its centre with his tracts, disputations, and sermons, and in his translation of the Bible he planted that seed which was to spring up and bear fruit at the glorious Reformation. Some terrible "brushes" were inflicted when Martin Luther flung the Pope's bull into the flames, and went forth like another David against the Giant, proclaiming the supremacy of God's Word and the right of every man to read it. And more "brushes" still Giant Pope received when our fathers threw off the yoke they were not able to bear at that period so obnoxious to Rome and its sympathisers, but so precious to every loyal and Protestant heart in England—the glorious Reformation.

But Popery's past is written in blood. The old Giant is a representative of a system which is a compound of Paganism and Christianity, and of a

tyranny the most gigantic and the most unscrupulous the world has ever seen. Shorn of strength, he is still restless and unchanged. His demands are as mighty, as uncompromising as ever. Where any of the old power which made kings hold his stirrup and whole kingdoms his slaves remains, he does not scruple to use it.

Wonderfully true is Bunyan's picture—Giant Pope has grown crazy and stiff in his joints, but the old spirit is alive still. He has retained the will though he has lost the power to persecute. He sits biting his nails and muttering to passing pilgrims, "You will never mend till more of you be burned."

Let our subject then suggest to us for the last thing—

3. **POPERY IS INTOLERANT IN PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.**—Now, in what I am about to say, I speak of Romanism as a system. I doubt not there are many Roman Catholics as amiable, benevolent, and kind as any who can be found in other bodies of professing Christians. I do not suppose that any of those with whom I am acquainted would defend the Inquisition, or like to give the sanction of their presence to an *Auto da fe*. My belief is that they do not understand the system to which they are allied, and the statement which I desire to make good, suggested by Giant Pope, is, that Popery is intolerant in principle and practice.

And here let me observe that I am quite prepared to be charged with the fact of other churches having persecuted beside the Church of Rome. I admit it.

I have no wish to defend all the bye-gone practices of my own Church or offer any excuse for them. There are blots on the fair fame of the Independents of Cromwell's time, in defence of which I have nothing to say. But persecution is no part of the Protestant creed. I oppose Romanism in either letter or spirit, whether I find it in a Popish Cathedral, or a Church of England Church, or a Dissenting Chapel.

But whatever charge of the kind can be brought against other communities, only of Popery can it be said that it is thoroughly intolerant in principle and practice. For the blood that has been shed, the property that has been confiscated, the tortures that have been inflicted, the Church of Rome is responsible. These have been no mere acts of the state, but proceedings in perfect conformity with her own canon law. Look at the Inquisition, with all its instruments of torture. Can we think of it without a shudder, dreaded and hated even in Spain, and yet cherished and enforced by the Church of Rome. It was founded, be it remembered, for the express object of extirpating heresy. The first inquisitor and many others of the judges have been canonised. It was no mere state contrivance, but a part of the system, praised in the bulls of popes and fully sanctioned by the Romish hierarchy.

With all allowance we may be willing to make for the intolerance of past ages, we cannot obliterate the terrible records of history. Can we wipe from it the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, when four thousand persons were slain in cold blood? Can

we forget how Gregory the 13th, the reigning Pope, went in solemn procession to St. Peter's to return thanks to God, and caused a medal to be struck off to commemorate the great event? Can we cease to remember how Pope Innocent the 3rd carried fire and sword through the beautiful country of the Waldenses? Do we not cherish the memory of our own Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Bradford, Rogers, and Rowland Taylor, who were burned in Mary's reign, and that of the "noble army of martyrs" who in different ages have been faithful to their Saviour and true to the Word of God? And have we forgotten how the Madias were thrown into the prison some years ago for no greater crime than that of reading the Bible; how agents of the Bible Society have been flung into the dungeon only because Bibles were found upon them?

Does not all history proclaim Popery to be intolerant in principle and practice? She demands toleration in Protestant lands, but in Popish lands she does not grant it. She prohibits the use of the Scriptures, opposes in every way their circulation, stands in the way of all advancement in science and political freedom, and imposes the most glaring frauds for miracles on the credulous and ignorant.

Her demand is—religious dominion, to the exclusion of every other form of faith. Only a few weeks ago, with an imposing ceremony, in every one of the Roman Catholic places of worship throughout Great Britain, England was dedicated to the Mother of God and to St. Peter. I do not write as I feel concerning this insult offered to a Protestant country,

but the unchanging character of Romanism was shown by what the preacher at the Pro Cathedral, Copperas Hill, Liverpool, said in his sermon. Here are his words, as reported in the newspapers—“England was known throughout the world as that one nation of all others which was the dowry of the blessed Mother of God. After a thousand years of such profound faith and such chivalrous devotion to Mary there came over the land a dark cloud of heresy, under which altars were overturned, sanctuaries destroyed, and the image of Mary, the heavenly Queen of England, was smashed into fragments, *thus leaving the land without the faith*, and almost without a trace of the love of Mary.”

And this is the system we are asked to re-establish in this country. Romanism, fast dying on the continent, is praying for the conversion of England and straining every power to gain supremacy in our land. Her churches increase among us, her Priests are seen everywhere, her Sisters of Mercy visit our poor and have access to our public institutions, and her monasteries and nunneries abound on every hand. And what is worse than all, the Church of England has unworthy sons who are wearing Protestant surplices, signing Protestant Articles, and eating Protestant bread, and yet who are acting the part of the Jesuit, and doing the work of the Church of Rome. Now, shall we shut our eyes to the facts of history? Shall we forget those truthful words of Macaulay—“During the last three centuries to stunt the growth of the human mind has been her chief object. Throughout Christendom,

whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has everywhere been in inverse proportion to her power." These assertions are not rashly made. The Church of Rome is intolerant in principle and practice. We must not judge of her by what she is here. Among us she is the old Giant, biting his nails because he cannot get at poor pilgrims. She must be judged by what she is in countries beneath her sway.

We are thankful for the large amount of toleration which prevails in these days. As Bishop Philip Brooke has said, "We look back on the 16th and 17th century, and wonder at the enormities of bigotry, and are thankful for the progress."

But while we denounce Popery with our lips let us take care we keep it out of our hearts. Oh, to give Christ the throne of our souls. Let us pray that light may dawn upon the minds of those enslaved by Papal errors, and that God may preserve our land from a system which has been a curse and blight wherever it has ruled. Oh, to be true to those principles for which our martyrs died. Oh, to glory in that simple Bible faith which has made our land the freest and noblest under heaven. Let us leave harshness, bitterness, and persecution to Rome, but let us be true to the Church we venerate and faithful to the Master we serve.

"I ask a perfect creed !

Oh, that to me were given,
The teaching that leads none astray,
The scholarship of heaven.

Calm faith that grasps the word
Of Him who cannot lie ;
That hears alone the voice divine,
Though crowds are standing by.

The one whole truth I'll seek,
In this sad age of strife ;
The truth of Him who is the Truth,
And in whose truth is life.

Truth which contains true rest ;
Which is the grave of doubt ;
Which ends uncertainty and gloom,
And casts the falsehood out.

O True One, give me truth !
And let it quench in me
The thirst of this long-craving heart,
And set my spirit free.

The Truth of God, destroy
The cloud, the chain, the war ;
Dawn to this stormy midnight be,
My bright and morning star."



SEVENTEENTH DAY.

FAITHFUL.

“There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”—1 Cor. xii. 6.

EVERY Christian has the witness of experience. Whoever by the grace of God has become His child and the inheritor of future glory, can tell of dealings with his soul overflowing with mercy, tenderness, and love. But “there are diversities of operations.” No two believers have gone along precisely the same path. Between some the shades of difference may be small, but those shades exist, and believers amid the sunlight of their glorious home will love to compare notes and rejoice in ascribing all praise to that loving God “which worketh all in all.”

It is well that this fact should be constantly borne in mind. Wisely has one written, “You are too apt to feel that your religious experience must be the same as others have; but where will you find analogies for this? Certainly not in nature. God’s

works do not come from His hand like coins from the mint. It seems as if it were a necessity that each one should be in some sort distinct from every other. No two leaves on the same tree are precisely alike ; no two buds on one bush have the same unfolding, nor do they seek to have."

Now, no man knew better how true this is than Bunyan. He had an experience of his own—hard, bitter, and severe—but he had studied his Bible, his own heart, and the lives of others too well to suppose that all were cast in the same mould, dealt with in the same way, or brought to heaven through precisely the same means. And it would seem that this is the truth which he designed to convey in introducing another hero into his story in the person of *Faithful*, of whom we have already heard something, but concerning whom we are now to know more.

Let us then see that in the Covenant of Grace there is infinite variety in providential dealing. Let us notice that our loving Father in Heaven has the way for His people marked out, and that amid the greatest differences of discipline there is but one glorious purpose, even that of bringing every one of them to himself. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Now then to our story.

Christian on leaving Giant Pope made his way to a little ascent which had been cast up on purpose that pilgrims might see before them. From this he saw Faithful before him on his journey. There are precious moments in a believer's history when God

opens his eyes to glorious sights which greatly cheer him on his way. Sometimes he enjoys a glimpse of that far-off land to which his longing heart is ever turning. Sometimes he gets a view of some fellow-pilgrim journeying to the same home. But these are "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Such had Christian, so he called aloud to Faithful, saying, "Stay, and I will be your companion."

Faithful looked behind him, but on Christian crying after him again, he answered, "No, I am upon my life, and the avenger of blood is behind me."

Christian was hurt at this reply, but, making a great effort, he not only reached Faithful but passed him. "Then did Christian vaingloriously smile, because he had gotten the start of his brother: but not taking good heed to his feet he suddenly stumbled and fell, and could not rise again until Faithful came up to help him."

This is very instructive. We can hardly be surprised at Christian being annoyed at Faithful thus seeming to refuse his company, but certainly if the slight was felt it was never intended. Christian should have recalled to his memory the dangers of the road he had past, and, assured of the many yet remaining, he should have seen in Faithful's holy decision and unwearied exertion a noble example for himself. But Faithful who had become so recently a pilgrim had apparently outstripped him, and the man whose acquaintance he had so long desired to have was so anxious to get on that he refused to stay a moment *even for him*. Here was the offence.

It was this led to Christian's vainglorious effort—intended to show Faithful that he was quite as advanced in the heavenly journey as himself—and that fall which taught him so severe a lesson laid him under obligation to the very person whom he had secretly envied and despised.

Thus, my dear readers, does the old man remain with us. How difficult it is to shake him off. Such a spirit is the work of that carnal nature which we shall not entirely lose until we exchange the cross for the crown.

God's people have hard battles with it. Envy, jealousy, ambition, pride are terrible foes to the Christian.

Here see the reason of his falls, his humiliation, his trials,—hard discipline is his lot. Oh to rejoice in the attainments of others, even though they are higher and better than our own. Heavenly-mindedness can have no fellowship with a spirit of envy. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."—Phil. ii. 3.

"Then," writes the Dreamer, "I saw in my dream, they went very lovingly on together, and had sweet discourse of all things that had happened to them in their pilgrimage."

It is now to this deeply interesting conversation I have to direct special attention. We have presented to us the picture of two believers comparing notes.

We have in each an individuality which is always conspicuous, and a consequent difference in experi-

ence which is deeply instructive. In the loving intercourse Christian and Faithful go forward, and let us gather from their “sweet discourse” something which may serve to cheer *us* on the same heavenward way.

Let us observe in the first place:—

1. FAITHFUL GIVES CHRISTIAN SOME NEWS OF HIS OLD HOME AND OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.—The two pilgrims had been fellow-townsmen in the City of Destruction, so that it was quite natural that they should talk about the old home. Christian had left it before Faithful, so that the latter was able to supply the latest information. Faithful related that he had stayed in the City till he could stay no longer, for after the departure of Christian there was a strong impression abroad that it would be burned to the ground. But it seemed that there was little reality in these forebodings, for the inhabitants derided Christian, and called his journey a desperate one. But Faithful believed in the approaching destruction, and had made his escape.

Thus is it when one is aroused to “flee from the wrath to come,” some are awakened to notice his conduct, and are apparently convinced of sin and danger. But, alas, the conviction has no depth in it. It passes away like the early dew, and gives place to a spirit of derision which makes its unhappy possessor more hardened and rebellious than ever. Here and there a *faithful* one believes in the peril and turns his back upon the City of Destruction. Few indeed are these in number.

“Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there ;
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveller.”

Christian inquired about Pliable. Faithful told him he had heard of his desertion at the Slough of Despond, and assured Christian that, being covered with dirt, his conduct was well known, and that he was seven times worse than if he had never gone out of the city. And the reason was plain. He was a turn-coat and one who had been untrue to his profession. Faithful met him once in the street, but he leered away on the other side, as one ashamed of what he had done.

The world, my reader, has little sympathy with those who reprove its sins and forsake its company, but it is a very fair judge of consistency. It knows what a profession of religion means, and has a supreme contempt for those who, having made it, from sheer cowardice, forsake it. It has no love for piety, but it values honesty. An open infidel it will esteem, but a craven professor of religion it will suspect. The Pliables in the long run are always despised. They are timid, irresolute, and weak. They inspire a few with hope, but ten to one they will perish in the overthrow of the city, verifying the old proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

Have we, like Christian and Faithful, turned our back on the City of Destruction? Have we, with unceasing effort, pressed forward to that celestial

home for which we long as the consummation of our joy? Let us bless God for that grace which has deepened the desire which took possession of our hearts, and, notwithstanding all the difficulties in our way, kept us resolute and firm, willing to suffer and to die rather than relinquish our purpose.

We have chosen "the good part." It may be allied with worldly poverty. It may arouse little of the applause, and less still, of the love of our earthly friends. But at the last great day it will be seen that we acted wisely. Who were the fools and madmen will be clearly shown. "Wisdom shall be justified of her children."

God grant that at the dread hour when "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up," we may be found in that *Christian* company—the *faithful* ones—who, washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in His righteousness, shall reach that for which they yearned so long, and rest in the bosom of God for ever.

But we have done with the City of Destruction and Pliable. "Well, neighbour Faithful," said Christian, "let us leave him and talk of things that more immediately concern ourselves. Tell me, now, what you have met with in the way as you came: for I know you have met with some things, or else it may be writ for a wonder."

2. FAITHFUL GIVES CHRISTIAN INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS EXPERIENCE BY THE WAY.—We

cannot read what follows without perceiving the truth of my observation about the differences in Christian experience. The histories of Christian and Faithful are commentaries on the words of our text—"There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

Faithful had nothing to do with the Slough of Despond, saw nothing of the lions which had so terrified Christian, and never met with Apollyon in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But he had not escaped trials. They were certainly not the same as Christian's, but they were scarcely less terrible.

There was *Wanton*, that temptress of whom the wise King spoke when he said, "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." "The strange woman that flattereth with her lips." In this is set forth the assault of unlawful passion—the power of the lusts of the flesh—that which flung David into the dust, and that which has wrecked many a great and noble soul.

There are those who could march without a trembling nerve to the breach choked with the dead and dying, who are weakness itself in the presence of the temptations of the flesh. There are Christians who find these more difficult to deal with than any of the other many foes with which they have to measure strength. It was not without reason Bunyan threw *Wanton* into Faithful's path.

There was *Adam the First*. He was an old man who dwelt in the Town of Deceit. Faithful met with him at the foot of the hill Difficulty. The old man tempted Faithful to dwell with him, telling him

that his work was many delights, and his wages, that he should be his heir at last. Moreover, he assured him that his house was maintained with all the dainties in the world, that his servants were those of his own begetting, and that if he would he should marry his three daughters—Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. Faithful was nearly won over by these enticements; but, looking on the old man's forehead, he saw there written, "Put off the old man with his deeds."

"Then," said Faithful, "it came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said, and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house he would sell me for his slave. So I bid him forbear to talk, for I would not come near to the door of his house. Then he reviled me, and told me that he would send such a one after me that should make my way bitter to my soul. So I turned to go away from him; but just as I turned myself to go thence, I felt him take hold of my flesh, and give me such a deadly twitch back that I thought he had pulled part of me after himself. This made me cry, 'O wretched man!'—so I went on my way up the hill."

What a vivid picture we have here of that struggle with the corrupt nature which every truly pious soul has every hour—every moment—to maintain. It is a terrible conflict. St. Paul was passing through it when he said, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

My reader, all those evil propensities and dispositions which lead us astray—all those corrupt

passions and desires which prevent our growth in purity and holiness, are the efforts of Adam the First to gain us over to his service. This tendency to evil seems to start up unbidden, and never entirely leaves us. By grace it is conquered; but, alas, we know it is not destroyed. Bunyan had to deal with Adam the First. All good men have had to do with him. Not until we reach the Celestial City shall we have done with him altogether. It was not without reason that Adam the First was placed in the path of Faithful.

Looking behind him, Faithful saw one coming after him swift as the wind. He overtook him just where Christian lost his roll. This was *Moses*. With him it was but a word and a blow, and he knocked Faithful down and laid him for dead. Three times was the blow repeated and the reason given—because of his secret inclining to Adam the First. He knew not how to show mercy. But one came by and bade him forbear. Christian inquired—“Who was that bid him forbear?” Faithful answered, “I did not know him at first, but as he went by I perceived the holes in his hands and in his side: then I concluded that he was our Lord, so I went up the hill.”

What a beautiful commentary we have here on those words, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” How clearly we have unfolded the difference between the Law and the Gospel. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” Knocked down—self-condemned and convicted by that law which demands full, perfect, and unfaltering obedience, the sinner looks to that blessed

Saviour who has redeemed him from the curse of the law, and introduced him to the blessings of that Gospel which secures to him an easy yoke, a light burden, and perfect rest, and peace, and joy for ever.

As we have said, Faithful escaped all conflict with Apollyon, saw nothing of the horrors of that valley through which Christian had to pass. But in the Valley of Humiliation he met two very crafty and subtle foes. They were *Discontent* and *Shame*.

Discontent did his best to persuade him that the valley was without honour, and that his friends—Pride, Arrogancy, Self-Conceit, and Worldly Glory—would be much offended with him if he went on.

Faithful replied that all these relations had long since disowned him, and that he had quite misrepresented the thing, for “before honour is humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

With *Shame* he had a long contest. *Discontent* was vanquished by argument, but “this bold faced *Shame* would never have done.”

“He objected against religion itself. He said it was a pitiful, low, sneaking business for a man to mind religion; he said a tender conscience was an unmanly thing.” Every insinuation which could lower religion in Faithful’s eyes was thrown out. It was embraced only by the low and obscure; it was a shame to sit whining and moaning under a sermon, and a shame to come sighing and groaning home; it was a shame to ask forgiveness or to make restitution; a shame to disregard the great because of a few vices, and respect the base because of the same religious fraternity.

Nobly did Faithful meet Shame with the avowal that what God says is best, though all the men in the world were against it. God prefers his religion, and a tender conscience. They that make themselves fools for the kingdom of heaven are wisest. The poor man that loveth Christ is richer than the greatest man in the world that hates him.

Thus did Faithful fling off Shame, and in answer to Christian's question—"Did you meet nobody else in the valley?" he replied, "No, not I; for I had sunshine all the rest of the way through that and also through the Valley of the Shadow of Death."

And now we must leave our two Pilgrims. How different was their experience, and how united were they in spirit and in purpose. It is so with us all. Whatever may meet us in our path to heaven—darkness or sunshine—there is an essential oneness after all in all those who love a common Saviour, and press forward to a common home. Let us each take care that while we bear the marks of our individuality—be it the lighter gayer temperament of Faithful or the more thoughtful and nervous disposition of Christian—we can take God at His word, cleave to Him in every hour of our history, and press on, full of faith and love, to the celestial city.

Beloved, how is it with you? Let the covenant promises of God, secured to you in Christ, be your sheet anchor, and, never fear, that which now you only faintly imagine shall be fully realized in the glorious home which God has prepared for those that love Him.

“ Fear not the foe, thou flock of God,
Fear not the sword, the spear, the rod,
Fear not the foe !
He fights in vain who fights with thee ;
Soon shalt thou see his armies flee,
Himself laid low.

Not long the sigh, the toil, the sweat,
Not long the fight-day's wasting heat ;
The shadows come. ;
Slack not thy weapon in the fight ;
Courage ! for God defends the right ;
Strike home ! strike home !



EIGHTEENTH DAY

TALKATIVE

“Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”—
JAMES ii. 17.

THE rapidity with which Bunyan introduces his characters is a remarkable proof of the fertility of his genius. No sooner have we finished with one than we are brought into contact with another. And, as the characters of this wonderful allegory pass before us, we can hardly help expressing our surprise at the knowledge of human nature which the gifted Tinker of Bedford manifests, and of that power of analysis which has enabled him to present to us such characters as those we have considered and those which remain with far more than the vigour of a picture—even with the accuracy of life.

The fact is, when we read the Pilgrim's Progress we must always remember that a purpose essentially practical filled the mind of its author. He wrote, not to please the world, but to instruct the Church. With the intuition of genius, sanctified by the Spirit

of God, he wrote, not for one age only, but for every age. Hence it is, his characters are not peculiar to his own times. They are among us now, bearing the same features and playing the same part as when the master-hand of Bunyan drew them. This accounts for the popularity of his book, which instead of diminishing in the lapse of time increases every day.

These opening remarks will serve to introduce to our notice one who is represented as walking beside Christian and Faithful—a tall man who looked more comely at a distance than near at hand—*Talkative*. The skill with which Bunyan has drawn this character is truly wonderful. The picture is no mere sketch, but a finished portrait—a photograph done to the life. Let us now examine it, and as we do so see how true is that declaration of an inspired Apostle which stands at the head of our Chapter—“Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

We will first endeavour to show that this man was extremely plausible; secondly, that he was thoroughly empty; and, by way of application, we will, lastly, dwell as time may permit on the marks of a true faith.

1. TALKATIVE WAS EXTREMELY PLAUSIBLE.—Faithful, like a true pilgrim, addressed him: “Friend, whither away; are you going to the heavenly country?” Without a moment’s hesitation Talkative replied, “I am going to that place.” A careful study of the conversation which followed will bring out the fact of how easy it is to talk about religion, and perhaps serve to put us on our guard against

that large class whose “sounding brass and tinkling cymbal” mislead many, and who are well described by the words, “They say and do not.”

How plausible was Talkative. What more could we need in the way of Christian confession? He cheerfully became the companion of the two pilgrims. His orthodoxy would be regarded by our churches beyond all dispute. He laments the general disinclination of men to speak of serious things, and their habitual worldliness. He talks with such fluency and so much earnestness about the “things of God,” of miracles, wonders, and signs, and the Holy Scripture, and with so much accurate knowledge of the new birth, the insufficiency of our works, the need of Christ’s righteousness, the profitableness of conversation on the subjects of repentance, faith, prayer, the promises and consolations of the Gospel, and the like, that Faithful is quite enraptured, and replies, “All this is true, and glad I am to hear these things from you.”

And how ready is he with his answers. Faithful drops a gentle hint to the effect that the want of conversation on these topics can hardly be said to be the cause of ignorance and failure, inasmuch as heavenly knowledge is not the result of industry, but is the gift of God. Talkative instantly replies that he is quite aware of this, adding, “all is of grace, not of works. I could give you a hundred scriptures for the confirmation of this.”

Faithful asks for a subject on which they may discourse. Talkative answers, “What you will: I will talk of things heavenly or things earthly; things

moral or things evangelical ; things sacred or things profane ; things past or things to come ; things foreign or things at home ; things more essential or things circumstantial : provided that all be done to our profit." Poor Faithful, the type of that class of Christians light of heart, sanguine, and susceptible, is perfectly astonished. Stepping up to Christian, who we must notice significantly walked by himself, he said to him but softly, " What a brave companion have we got ! Surely this man will make a very excellent pilgrim."

What a finished picture we have here. Who but Bunyan could have drawn it ? Talkative could speak on any subject you like. As to religion, there was nothing beyond him. There was not a question he could not answer—not a problem he could not solve—and he had chapter and verse for everything. Can we say this character has ceased to live ? I fear not. There are Talkatives in the Church still. Such are so plausible that many are deceived by them. They have to be known before they can be found out, for they look " something more comely at a distance than near at hand."

Bunyan would put us on our guard against them. The power to *talk* about religion, the ability to discuss theological questions, the facility in stringing together passages of Scripture, must not be taken as any evidence of piety. There are hundreds equal to this who know nothing of the Spirit's work in the heart. Early associations, educational training, a strong memory, the gift of speech, is quite enough to make a man a good talker

on religion or any theme to which attention has been given, but that such may exist without any real sense of sin or any true holiness of character is painfully obvious in the scandalous lives of many who are members and even office-bearers in Christian churches, and make religion a byword in the world.

“How much religion do you think you have?” said a young Mr. Talkative to an aged Christian. “*Nothing to speak of,*” was the brief but significant reply.

But “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” This is true, but we must take care we are not carried away by mere words. The Pharisees were no doubt admirable talkers about feast-days and fast-days, the payment of a tithe, or the length of a robe, but we know upon authority which could not err, that while they made clean the outside of the cup and platter, their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness.

Let Bunyan’s character of Talkative put us on our guard. A facility for quoting Scripture is no guarantee for a true heart. Balaam knew a great deal more than he felt, and it is so with thousands.

When a man talks very fluently about his spiritual knowledge and experience, it is time to stand in doubt of him. Such subjects may lawfully enter into the conversation of Christians, but they will always be accompanied with the most evident modesty and humility. The letter of Scripture on the tongue is no warrant for its spirit being in the heart and life.

We have heard persons arguing for Election and Divine Sovereignty with surprising zeal, and yet living at the same moment a most ungodly life. I have heard young converts string Scripture passages and phrases together with a readiness which has surprised me, and give way to raptures and ecstasies such as only the most experienced believers are permitted to enjoy.

Are we wise in leaping to Faithful's conclusion, "Surely this man will make a very excellent pilgrim?" Let us think of Talkative and beware. Head-knowledge is one thing—heart-knowledge is another. The chief priests and elders had a good acquaintance with the letter of the Scripture, but they knew no more. My dear reader, let us learn the lesson. No one was ever saved by his gifts. The ability to talk about religion goes for very little. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Let us now see, in the second place,

2. TALKATIVE WAS THOROUGHLY EMPTY.—When Faithful appealed to Christian, the latter "modestly smiled and said, This man, with whom you are so taken, will beguile with this tongue of his twenty of them that know him not." Christian then told Faithful more about the man. He lived in the City of Destruction. He was the son of Say-well, and dwelt in Prating Row. He was well known as Talkative in Prating Row. But Christian knew more about him still. He was like a picture which looks best at a distance, best abroad, ugly enough at home. He was for any company and any

talk, and he would talk anywhere, the better for the drink at the ale-bench. Religion had no place in his heart—it was all on his tongue. Christian told Faithful he might be quite sure he had been deceived. Talkative was to be classed among those who “say and do not.” He might talk of repentance, faith, and the new birth, but he could only talk about them. Christian had seen him at home and abroad, and his house was as empty of religion as the white of an egg was of savour. He knew nothing of prayer, and gave no sign of repentance for sin; indeed the brute served God better than he. He was a stain, reproach, and shame to religion. The common people knew him, “a saint abroad and a devil at home.” His family were afraid of him, and men would rather have dealings with a Turk than with him. He was a cheat with his neighbours, a tyrant with his children, and Christian wound up his terrible testimony by saying, “For my part, I am of opinion that he has by his wicked life caused many to stumble and fall; and will be, if God prevents not, the ruin of many more.”

Faithful saw that he had been deceived by the plausible tongue of Talkative. He observed to Christian, “Well I see that *saying* and *doing* are two things, and hereafter I shall better observe this distinction.”

Can anything be more scriptural than this conclusion? Well might Christian assure Faithful they are “as diverse as soul and body; for as the body without the soul is but a dead carcass, so, *saying*, if it be alone, is but a dead carcass also.”

Christian shows his fellow-pilgrim that Talkative was a self-deceiver, thinking that *hearing* and *saying* make a good Christian, assuring him that at the last day the question will not be, Did you believe? but Were you *doers* or *talkers* only? and accordingly they should be judged. After dwelling a little further on the worthlessness of a religion of talk, "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," "things without life giving sound," destitute of "the true faith and grace of the Gospel," Christian told Faithful how to get rid of his troublesome companion. The advice was very simple and very clear. He was to enter into discourse with him about the *power* of religion, and ask him if this thing be set up in his heart, house, or conversation.

Faithful therefore stepped forward again to Talkative and proposed as a subject—how doth the grace of God discover itself when it is in the heart of man? Talkative quite approved of it, and declared as his first proof that it caused a great outcry against sin. He was about to proceed to a second proof, but Faithful stopped to show him that the grace of God rather inclined the soul to *abhor* sin. After defending his position Talkative gave another proof—the knowledge of Gospel-mysteries.

To this Faithful objected, declaring it possible to know the mysteries of the Gospel and yet have no work of grace in the soul. "For there is a knowledge that is not attended with doing, 'he that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not.'"

Faithful dwelt at length on the difference between *knowing* and *doing*, showing that there is

knowledge that resteth in the bare speculation of things, and knowledge that is accompanied with the grace of faith and love; the first of these will serve the talker, but without the other the true Christian is not content. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea I shall observe it with my whole heart."

Talkative, beaten in argument, answered angrily "You lie at the catch again: this is not for edification."

Faithful bade him propound another sign how the work of grace discovereth itself, but Talkative replied in ill-humour "Not I, for I see we shall not agree."

Faithful then proceeded to show how it was manifested by conviction of sin, sorrow and shame on account of it, the revelation of the Saviour to the heart, and the absolute necessity for closing with him for life, and the sense of hungerings and thirstings after him. He further pointed out that in others it was discovered by an experimental confession of faith in Christ and a life of holiness answerable to that confession, and wound up by pressing home on Talkative two searching questions. "Do you experience this first part of this description of it? and doth your life and conversation testify the same? or standeth your religion in word or in tongue and not in deed and in truth?"

Then Talkative began to blush, but having recovered himself, owned he had not expected such a discourse. Moreover he questioned Faithful's right to be his catechiser, and claimed the liberty to refuse to make him his judge.

Then Faithful accused him of vile hypocrisy, declaring him to be a man whose religion lies in talk, that his conversation gave his mouth-profession the lie, that he was the cause of injury to others, and guilty of the worst of crimes.

At this Talkative scornfully closed the discussion by saying, "Since you are ready to take reports, and to judge so rashly as you do, I cannot but conclude you are some peevish or melancholy man, not fit to be discoursed with; and so adieu!

Thus was this empty professor and flippant talker unmasked. Well might Christian congratulate his brother on having got rid of him.

Faithful expressed his pleasure at having had this little discourse with Talkative, adding "It may happen that he will think of it again; however I have dealt plainly with him, and so am clear of his blood if he perisheth."

Christian then supplied a beautiful little commentary on Faithful's conduct. "You did well to talk so plainly to him as you did; there is but little of this faithful dealing with men now a days, and that makes religion to stink in the nostrils of many as it doth; for they are these talkative fools whose religion is only in words, and who are debauched and vain in their conversation, that being so much admitted into the fellowship of the Godly, do puzzle the world, blemish Christianity, and grieve the sincere. I wish all men would deal with such as you have done; then should they be either made more conformable to religion, or the company of Saints would be too hot for them."

Where is the true Christian who does not say "Amen" to this? How fearful is the injury which these Talkatives inflict upon religion. Do they not require to be dealt with faithfully and have their masks stripped from their faces? And yet the Churches nurse and pet them. They are rich, learned, influential. They talk loudly, give freely, and we cannot afford to lose them, though their conversation gives their mouth-profession the lie. My reader, such men are the cancer of the Church. They are eating into its very life. "From such withdraw thyself." So said St. Paul, and so said Christian to Faithful. God grant that we may ever deal gently with the sinner, but never, never with sin. A religion of mere talk is a religion of mere sound. The Church is the worse for it and the world no better for it. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

I propose closing by considering briefly—

3. THE MARKS OF A TRUE FAITH.—If faith without works is a dead faith—and utterly useless—what then is living faith—the faith that saves? I answer, it is belief in the truth as revealed in the Gospel. It embraces a cordial acceptance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ on our behalf, a firm conviction of the love of God as shown in the provision of mercy, and the profoundest gratitude for all that the Holy Spirit has accomplished in our hearts. And this faith is always accompanied by good works. It is evidenced by the loving devotion of ourselves to the service of Him who is the Author and Giver of all this unspeakable blessing.

We must not lose sight of this great truth. In this we may see a test of the reality of our faith. Talkative utterly failed before it.

Is it the settled desire of our souls to live to the glory of God in everything? Do we feel it to be our mission to do good to the world, to light its dark places, and to rescue some of its precious souls from the power of the devil?—then we have living, saving faith.

And this is the faith of all good men. Where have we the grandest examples of earnest, self-denying love on behalf of others? Where have we the noblest instances of sanctified zeal and holy courage in the great conflict with the evils that are in the world? Where shall we find the men who have built our almshouses for the poor, our hospitals for the sick, our asylums for the insane, and covered our soil with institutions which add more glory to our country than all the triumphs of her arms on sea and land? The answer is—the world owes all that is good and great and pure in it to Christianity. It may profess to despise religious earnestness. The Talkatives may pronounce it to be fanaticism and folly. But it can hardly help reading in the noble acts of self-denial, in the loving deeds of benevolence and kindness, which are the fruits of that philanthropy which is an inspiration from the great Teacher of Nazareth, a commentary on the words of our text—“Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone.”

My Readers, have you this faith? Are you like Talkative resting satisfied with barren and unfruitful knowledge? Take care, I beseech you, that you are

subjects of divine grace, that you show forth the praise of God, not only with your lips, but in your lives ; and, thus daily leaning upon Christ, doubt not the issue—inward peace, outward usefulness, ever brightening hopes, and glory everlasting.

“ I thank Thee, Lord, for using me
For Thee to work and speak ;
However trembling is the hand,
The voice however weak.

I bless Thee for each seed of truth.
That I through Thee have sow'd,
Upon this waste and barren earth—
The living seed of God.

For those to whom, through me, Thou' hast
Some heavenly guidance given ;
For some, it may be, saved from death,
And some brought nearer heaven.

For any hope, or light, or joy,
Imparted, Lord, through me,
To one sad soul upon this earth,
Unknown to all but Thee ;

I thank Thee, gracious God, for all
Of witness there hath been
From me, in any path of life,
Though silent and unseen ;

For any flower across life's path
At random I have flung ;
For dew to freshen aged hearts,
Or sunshine for the young.

Lord, keep us still the same, as in
Remembered days of old ;
O keep us fervent still in love,
'Mid many waxing cold.

Lord, make us beacon-lights on earth,
Authentic and divine ;
And, as the times grow darker still,
May we yet brighter shine.”

NINETEENTH DAY.

VANITY FAIR.

“Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—Rom. xii. 2.

“**T**HUS they went on talking of what they had seen by the way, and so made the way easy, which would otherwise no doubt have been tedious to them; for now they went through the wilderness.” This brief sentence shows us Christian and Faithful pursuing their journey after Talkative had left them. It presents us with a beautiful illustration of the Communion of Saints. Very sweetly and most truly has a Christian writer said, “It is with Christians as with burning coals. If these are scattered far apart, one after the other is easily extinguished; but, when collected together, the fire of one preserves that of the other, and the glowing coals often ignite others that lie near.”

These loving friends talked of what they had seen by the way. Who could doubt the burden of their song would be, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me?" How very different had been their experience, and yet their testimony would be exactly the same.

And this pleasant conversation about God's dealings with them made their way so easy that they almost forgot they were passing through a wilderness. It is ever so with Christians at seasons when, with loving interchange of thought, they cheer each other forward.

It were well for us if we indulged a little oftener in this blessed luxury and privilege. If believers talked less about the state of the money-market and more about the state of their souls, less about the doings of the world and more about their hopes for eternity, it would be better for them. Why should the subject of religion be shut out of the conversation of Christians? Why should they discuss freely all the questions of the day, questions in which they profess to take comparatively little interest, and never speak of that divine life in which they should experience daily growth, and of that glorious Kingdom the advancement of which may be supposed to be nearest and dearest to their hearts. Surely, my reader, we must take such a state of things as a bad sign. It does not go far to prove that our affections are set on things above and not on things on the earth—that we are consciously strangers and pilgrims journeying to a better land—that while we are on the way we dare not make friendships with

those who have no sympathy with the Master we serve—that our lives are a deep and solemn protest against the world's vanities and sins—and that our “conversation,” our citizenship, is in heaven. Let us, then, take example by Christian and Faithful. Loving intercourse with fellow-pilgrims will help us along our wilderness wonderfully. We shall gather strength in faith and hope from each other. Like those two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus we shall find it very profitable to talk together of the things which have happened.

“Great the joy when Christians meet !
Christian fellowship, so sweet !
When (their theme of praise the same)
They exalt the Saviour's name !”

On went our pilgrims. Little did they know what was before them, but ere they entered upon fresh perils they were permitted to enjoy the loving counsels of an old friend. The two subjects awaiting our consideration are the interview with Evangelist and the passage through Vanity Fair. In no portion of our Book is Bunyan's descriptive power so conspicuous. It is full of interest and as full of instruction. Let us try to learn much from it.

1. THE INTERVIEW WITH EVANGELIST.—We are told that when the pilgrims had “got almost quite out of” the wilderness Faithful espied one coming after them. “It is my good friend Evangelist,” said Christian. “Ay, and my good friend too,” said Faithful, “for it was he that set me the way to the gate.” The first words of Evangelist

were as loving as they well could be. "Peace be with you, dearly beloved, and peace be to your helpers." With what joy does Christian exclaim: "Welcome, welcome, my good Evangelist: the sight of thy countenance brings to my remembrance thy ancient kindness and unwearied labouring for my eternal good." "And a thousand times welcome, said good Faithful, thy company, O sweet Evangelist, how desirable it is to us poor pilgrims."

This grateful testimony of Christian and Faithful to the kind offices of Evangelist is singularly instructive. You will remember, my reader, I told you in our third chapter that this beautiful character introduced by Bunyan into his story is intended to represent the Christian Minister—not the hireling who careth not for the sheep, but the true son of consolation, the faithful ambassador of truth. And there is no doubt for this Bunyan drew largely on his own experience. He carried to his grave a deep sense of obligation to "holy Mr. Gifford," the Baptist minister of Bedford. He had known the value of a faithful earnest ministry.

And such he would commend. "Many," wrote M'Cheyne, "are fond of ministers, who are not fond of Christ;" but we may also say, "None who are fond of Christ will depreciate ministers." "There are men," said a noble thinker, "who imagine they should do well enough if they could throw the Bible overboard, and the ministers after it, and sink the whole Church in the sea. It is as if a man with a shattered limb should think to better himself by thrusting the doctors and their instruments out of

doors. They did not break his leg, but only propose to set it. Under the hand of the poorest of them the limb will be better than if the shattered bone were left to heal unsplintered."

A true ministry therefore is one of God's greatest blessings. Christian and Faithful felt it to be so when they bade Evangelist welcome. Be it yours, my reader, to reverence ministers for their work's sake, and give them a place in your prayers. I know no class of men who need so many prayers. They are "men of like passions" with yourselves, and just as liable to fall. Ask God to keep them above the influence of the world, either its flattery or its frown. Never make Popes of them, but esteem them as the ambassadors of Christ.

"I am past usefulness," said an old lady to her minister; "the Lord spares my days, but I can do no good now." "You are doing a great deal of good," said the minister. "You help me to preach every Sabbath." Of course she was very much surprised. Help her minister to preach! Why how? "In the first place," said he, "you are always in your seat at Church, and that helps me. In the second place, you are always wide awake, looking right up in my face, and that helps me. In the third place, I often see tears running down your cheeks, and that helps me very much." Depend upon it, in every Christian's heart there will be found a high regard for the faithful minister of Christ. Happy, too, the minister who has the testimony which Evangelist received.

"Then, said Evangelist, how hath it fared with

you, my friends, since the time of our last parting? What have you met with, and how have you behaved yourselves? Then Christian and Faithful told him all things that had happened to them in the way; and how, with what difficulty, they had arrived at that place."

The weighty words which Evangelist addressed to the pilgrims are well worthy of attentive regard; but we can only very briefly consider them. They were words of congratulation and encouragement. He likewise warned them against the power of the devil, urged them to the steady exercise of faith, and bade them look well to their own hearts. So acceptable was this loving exhortation of their old friend, that the pilgrims begged Evangelist to speak further to them, and, as a prophet, tell them of things that might happen to them, and also how they might resist and overcome them.

Then Evangelist, like another Agabus, told them of coming persecution. He reminded them of the words of the truth of the Gospel, "that you must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and again, that "in every city bonds and afflictions abide you." He predicted approaching trials; how in the town they were nearing they would be beset by enemies, and how one of them would seal the testimony they held in blood, but, he added, "Be thou faithful unto death, and the King will give you a crown of life."

He concluded by assuring them that the martyr would have the better of his fellow, not only because he would reach the Celestial City first, but because

he would escape many miseries which the other would have to meet: and he bade them, when all this shall have been fulfilled, to remember their friend, quit themselves like men, and “commit the keeping of their souls to God as unto a faithful Creator.”

Such advice was worthy of the lips of a true Evangelist. I sometimes think we, as ministers, deal far too seldom with the difficulties of the Christian course.

The young convert little knows the dangers which will beset him in *Vanity Fair*. It may be no martyrdom awaits him, but he will surely discover that “those who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.” There will be plenty of ungenerous insinuations and abundance of ridicule ready for all who will dare to avow their faith in the Saviour.

Ministers should deal with these matters. It is all very well to point to the crown at the end, but they must not forget the cross by the way. If as Christians we have much to gain, we have assuredly something to lose. We must not expect better treatment than our Master received. We have all to pass through *Vanity Fair*. But we have every encouragement to go forward. Our souls are in safe keeping. For great worldly comfort as God’s people we need not look, but of final victory and eternal happiness we should never doubt.

Thus did good Evangelist counsel Christian and Faithful. And thus will it be with every true ministry. There will be no immoderate expectations held

out. The plain fact will be stated. Vanity Fair has to be passed through. Hatred, reproach, persecution must be looked for. Far better know all this at starting than find it out too late. Well has one said, "If we are not ready to take part in the afflictions of Christ we must never expect to share His glory."

This brings us to the second subject for our consideration.

2. THE PASSAGE THROUGH VANITY FAIR.—In describing Vanity Fair Bunyan is manifestly quite at home. He evidently drew that which he had often seen. He could very probably recall the time when with his father's travelling smithery he had plied his bellows and mended his kettles in sight of many a merry-andrew's stage. We know from his biographer something of his love of fun and mischief. Here is a sketch of him:—"Yonder is young Bunyan, the noisiest of his party, playing at pitch-and-toss, that one with the shaggy eyebrows, whose whole soul is ascending in the twirling penny. He is grim enough to be a blacksmith's apprentice, but his singed garments hang round him with an idle freedom which scorns indentures, while his energetic vociferations bespeak the ragamuffin ringleader. The penny comes down wrong side uppermost, and a loud execration at once betrays young "Badman."

John Bunyan would have little difficulty in describing Vanity Fair.

"Then I saw in my dream that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a

town before them; the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair; it is kept all the year long; it beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is 'lighter than vanity,' and also because all that is there sold or that cometh thither is vanity. As is the saying of the wise, 'all that cometh is vanity.'"

Then follows the most wonderful description of this world which genius ever conceived. It should be most carefully read and studied. This fair has great antiquity on its side. It is almost five thousand years old, for Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, seeing that the way to the Celestial City lay through this town of Vanity, had set it up. The merchandise of this fair is suited to every taste. It lasts all the year long, and all sorts of vanity are sold in it. There are houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, delights of all sorts. Moreover, there are at all times juggling, cheats, games, plays, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind. Here we see every rank of life, every variety of mind can meet with all it needs; and every peculiarity of national taste is considered. "Here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row; where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. The ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair, only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat."

What a vivid picture is this. How true to the life

it is. Who does not see that this world can minister to every want of the unregenerate heart? It has vanities of every kind, and not one need be unsupplied. Its merchandise is equal to all demands—its amusements suited to every fancy. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” can be abundantly gratified. There are refined gaieties for the high born, and there are sinks of pollution for the low. Every nation has its peculiar tastes, but for each every passion can be gratified, and all sorts of vanities sold.

And the superstitious can have full enjoyment, “for the ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly promoted.” They can buy indulgence in any vice, the forgiveness of any sin, free license to riot in any excess. They can please themselves with any number of baubles in the way of crosses to wear and beads to count, lights for the altar and dresses for the priest. When we think of all this, and see how its issue is to absorb men in the perishable and blind them to the eternal—tie them down to pursuits and enjoyments which are not only paltry and unworthy in themselves, but injurious to anything like spirituality of mind and devotedness of spirit, can we wonder at the many warnings against this *Vanity Fair* which the Word of God contains?

“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”—Mark viii. 36.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of

the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”—John xv. 18, 19.

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God.”—James iv. 4.

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”—1 John ii. 17.

“Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”—Rom. xii. 2.

But Christian and Faithful must pass through *Vanity Fair*. Bunyan tells us the way to the Celestial City lies through the town of Vanity, “and he that will go to the city, and yet not go through this town, must needs go out of the world.” The Prince of Princes went through it, and on a fair day too. It was here Beelzebub, the chief Lord of the Fair, invited Him to buy his vanities, and, indeed, offered to make Him Lord of the Fair if only He would have done him reverence. But the Prince of Princes was not to be beguiled. He left the town without laying out so much as a farthing on its vanities.

My readers, *in* the world we *must be*, but *of* the world we *need not be*. It is the way to the Celestial City, but we are not obliged to purchase its vanities or indulge in its sins. Our divine Master passed through it and mingled with its busy scenes, and yet triumphed over the Evil One, and was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Let us, therefore, be assured that we must each pass through

Vanity Fair. Those who would shut themselves up in the monastery or spend their days in the hermit's cell make a vain attempt to get to heaven by some other road. Let us never forget, there is but one way, and that lies through the town of *Vanity*.

But let us see how our pilgrims fared on their journey. As they entered the fair all the people were moved. There were three causes for the hubbub which arose. The first was their *dress*, unlike anything to be seen among the traders of the fair. The second was their *speech*, the language of Canaan, very different from any of the tongues from one end of the fair to the other. And the third was their *contempt of the wares*—they cared not even to look at them; but when the merchandisers called after them they put their fingers in their ears and cried “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,” looking upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic were in heaven.

One asked them, mockingly, “What will ye buy?” and they, looking gravely on him, said “We buy the truth.” After this a storm of derision and reproach burst upon them. The great one of the fair came down to quell the tumult. The pilgrims were brought to examination, and declared themselves to be strangers and pilgrims going to their own country, the heavenly Jerusalem, having given no occasion for this abuse except it be their having said that they would “buy the truth.” All they could say was to no purpose. They were cruelly treated and put into a cage as a spectacle to all the men of the fair. But their temper and spirit gained them friends, and only

served to increase the commotion. Brought up to another examination, they were pronounced guilty of all this disturbance, beaten, and chained, and led through the fair as a terror and example to others. But their meekness and patience won many more to their side. This exasperated their enemies so much that they resolved on their death; so they were put into the cage again and their feet made fast in the stocks. Here they comforted each other with the assurance of Evangelist, each secretly wishing for the preferment he predicted, and committing themselves into the hands of "the faithful Creator"—"Him that ruleth all things."

Here for the present we must leave our pilgrims.

We are each of us passing through Vanity Fair. Are we distinguishable by *our dress*—the finished robe of our Saviour's righteousness—He who was "made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?" Are we marked by our *speech*—the language of Canaan, "seasoned with salt," the devout words of souls sanctified by grace, having their "conversation in Heaven?" Are we known by our *spirit*—scorning the least compromise of principle, striving against worldly conformity, meeting reproach and shame with meekness and patience, as the followers of the holy Jesus?

If thus you are endeavouring to obey the exhortation of our text—"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God"—you shall be firm and steadfast in every temptation, strong in the sense of

God's love and power, calm in every season of suffering and sorrow, and, though sometimes called upon to dwell in shade and walk in darkness, you shall pass through the world with your garments unspotted and your roll secure, and finally rest in the bosom of God for ever.

“Glad in yonder blest abodes,
Dwell the raptured Saints above,
Where no anxious care corrodes,
Happy in Emmanuel's love !
Once, indeed, like us below,
Pilgrims in this vale of tears,
Torturing pain and heavy woe,
Gloomy doubts, distressing fears !

Oft the big, unbidden tear,
Stealing down the furrow'd cheek,
Told, in eloquence sincere,
Tales of woe they could not speak :
But these days of weeping o'er,
Past these scenes of toil and pain,
They shall feel distress no more,
Never, never weep again.

All is tranquil and serene,
Calm and undisturbed repose,
There no cloud can intervene,
There no angry tempest blows.
Every tear is wiped away,
Sighs no more shall heave the breast ;
Night is lost in endless day—
Sorrow—in eternal rest.”

TWENTIETH DAY.

THE TRIAL AND MARTYRDOM.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—REV. ii. 10.

WE left Christian and Faithful comforting themselves in the expectation of a speedy death. They were in the hands of the inhabitants of Vanity Fair, and they would look for no mercy and hope for no escape.

In the account of the Trial and Martyrdom with which Bunyan has favoured us he has again drawn upon his own experience. As we go along we shall notice a little of his personal history, which evidently suggested to him portions of this narrative presented to us for our consideration to-day. We who are living in a period of fair-weather Christianity, are very apt to forget the price at which we have gained the liberties we now possess. “The noble army of martyrs” has very little of the regard it deserves among us whose lot is cast in happier days, and the

distance of time is not unlikely to make us unmindful of the debt we owe to those who "loved not their lives unto the death" for the sake of those who were to come after them.

I offer you no exposition of the text—a portion of the message which was addressed to the Church in Smyrna—but merely use it as applicable to that portion of our allegory which is now to receive our attention—the Trial and Martyrdom of Faithful. "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"

Carefully reading the narrative, we may offer you a few remarks on these four subjects :

1. THE JUDGE AND THE INDICTMENT.
2. THE WITNESSES AND THEIR EVIDENCE.
3. THE JURY AND THEIR VERDICT.
4. THE PRISONER AND HIS END.

1. THE JUDGE AND THE INDICTMENT.—The name of the judge was *Lord Hate-good*, and the indictment was as follows : "That they were enemies to, and disturbers of, their trade ; that they had made commotions and divisions in the town ; and had won a party to their own most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the law of their prince." The answer which Faithful made to this charge was as simple and straightforward as it well could be. He declared that he had set himself only against the enemies of God—"Him that is higher than the highest,"—that he had made no disturbance, being a man of peace, that those who had been won had only been turned from the worse to the better, and

he concluded thus : “ and as to the king you talk of, since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his angels.”

All this is very instructive. Bunyan, whose mind was deeply stored with the facts of Scripture, would, I have no doubt, be thinking of incidents in the lives of Christ and His apostles. He would remember how the chief priests and pharisees at the council had said concerning the Saviour “ If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him : and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” He would remember how, in the days of the early Church, Demetrius called “ the workmen of like occupation ” together, and, feeling quite sure if this Christianity of which every one was talking went on, no more silver shrines for Diana would be required, said to them, “ Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands ; so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught : but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.”

He would remember how the master of the damsel with the spirit of divination said concerning Paul and Silas : “ These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.” The indictment brought

against Christian and Faithful closely resembled these charges. And in both the judge and the indictment I have no doubt Bunyan had his eye on the incidents of his own times. In this Lord Hate-good we may see probably the portrait of most of the judges before whom the nonconformists of those days were arraigned, and more particularly of that worthy, Justice Keelin, before whom Bunyan was taken, and in whose presence he declared: "If I were out of prison to-day I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God." The sketch presented to us gives us a tolerably correct idea of the justice accorded to the sufferers for the truth in the days of the Stuarts.

And the indictment brought against Christian and Faithful is very like that which was served upon the tinker of Bedford: "That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer, being a person of such and such condition, he hath since such a time devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service; and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of our sovereign lord the king, &c."

This division of our subject may suggest to us how great are the advantages which we possess in relation to the judicial bench. We certainly have at times a melancholy exhibition in what is called "justice's justice," but we may thankfully acknowledge that there has never been a time when the law has been so impartially administered and the bench been more truly adorned than the present. We have

reason to believe the Lord Hate-goods are creatures of the past. And how grateful ought we to be for the large measure of religious liberty we enjoy. The lines have truly fallen unto us in pleasant places. The dark blots upon our statute-book are fast disappearing, never to return. The history of the past has to be written in tears, suffering, and blood, but we have the heritage of purer and better times. These have been the work of heroes—heroes whose memory should be held dear by all of us—and one of them was John Bunyan.

2. THE WITNESSES AND THEIR EVIDENCE.—

“Then proclamation was, that they that had aught to say for their lord the king against the prisoner at the bar should forthwith appear and give their evidence.”

Three witnesses came forward, *Envy*, *Superstition*, and *Pickthank*. We will hear them and look at them separately. *Envy* is the first to give evidence. Having stated that he had known the prisoner a long time and that he was ready to make his statement on oath, he was sworn.

“Then he said, My Lord, this man, notwithstanding his plausible name, is one of the vilest men in our country: he neither regardeth prince nor people, law nor custom; but doeth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in general calls ‘principles of faith and holiness.’ And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm, that Christianity and the customs of Vanity were diametrically opposite and could not be

reconciled. By which saying, my lord, he doth at once, not only condemn all our laudable doings, but us in the doing of them." Envy also volunteered further testimony if there should be any more required.

As this witness has given his evidence we will have a few words about him. *Envy* is a very old enemy of truth, and has many times borne witness against it. Why did Cain frown with wrath and clench his hand with murderous intent? "Because the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering," and not to his. Why did the sons of Jacob sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites and dip his coat in blood to make their poor old father believe a lie? Because they "envied" him. Why did Saul cast the javelin at David when as a minstrel the Shepherd-youth played before the king? Was it not because the women sang with the instruments of music, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands?" Why did Haman despise his wealth and the invitation to the banquet of his royal mistress? Was it not because he saw Mordecai sitting in the gate? Why was Christ handed over to his enemies?—"The chief-priests had delivered him for envy." Let us not then be surprised if, among other marks, we find the enemies of the truth "full of envy."—Rom. i. 29. It will be nothing new. Envy without regard to any reason will be always ready to cast our names out as "the vilest men in the country."

Whenever we are disposed to wonder at this, let us remember the words of St. James—"Do ye think the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"—James iv. 5.

Superstition is the next witness called.—Being sworn he began “ My Lord, I have no great acquaintance with this man, nor do I desire to have further knowledge of him ; however, this I know, that he is a very pestilent fellow, from some discourse that the other day I had with him in this town ; for then talking with him, I heard him say that our religion was nought and such by which no man could please God. Which saying of his, my lord, your worship very well knows what necessarily thence will follow, to wit, that we still do worship in vain, are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned ; and this is that which I have to say.” As this witness has given his evidence we will have a few words about him.

He might well say he had no great acquaintance with Faithful. What can *Superstition* have to do with real Christianity ? “ What concord hath Christ with Belial ? ” You observe *Superstition* speaks of *our religion*. Yes, it has a religion, or a religiousness of its own, one of place, ceremonies, vestments, ornaments, gestures, and postures, and the like. It deals largely in the washing of pots and cups, in tithing of the mint, anise, and cummin, in the straining out of gnats, and in the swallowing of camels, and so on.

This was the creed of the old Pharisees, and not very unlike that of the hundreds who in every age have cried “ Church ” instead of Saviour, put the Crucifix in the place of the Cross, sought a dead uniformity, instead of a living unity, and fostered a religion of mere letter rather than one of “ the Spirit and of power.”

The history of Superstition gives us one of the saddest and most revolting phases of human nature. It has degraded man to a level lower than that occupied by "the brutes that perish." It has thrown a heap of rubbish on the sublimest truths which it concerns our race to know, and shed the blood of many of the noblest and most heroic men and women that ever lived. And let us take care we keep it out of our hearts. There is an immense quantity of false coin current among us. The amount of "wood, hay and stubble" in the churches is something fearful to contemplate.

Do we see some little traditional dogma pitted against a truth of spiritual religion? This is Superstition giving evidence against Faithful—a scene, alas, acted over and over again in every age since the Pharisees put that question to Christ, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Oh, let us take care we do not confound Superstition with Religion. The two things are very different.

The last witness is *Pickthank*. This remarkable name is full of meaning. I think it is intended to set before us the miserable wretch who thrives on the reputation of others, who *picks up thanks* out of the vile aspersions he basely flings on the characters of those he can contrive to traduce. He is in the witness-box, and, having been sworn, gives his evidence against Faithful. He then charges Faithful with railing against the noble prince Beelzebub and the rest of the nobility, his personal friends, and even with having called the judge himself, Lord Hate-good, an ungodly villain, and bestowed "many

well.—*Surrey.*

(15,172) NURSERY RHYMES.—I quote from the memory of many years ago, so I hope “May-blossom” will pardon any inaccuracy.—*Old Judy.*

“As I walked over the meadows one day,
I listened, and heard a mother sheep say :
‘Oh! in all the green meadow there’s nothing so
sweet,

As my little lamb, with his nimble feet,
And his eye so bright! and his wool so white!

Oh! he is my darling, my heart’s delight.

The robin, he, that sits in the tree,

Dearly may dote on his darlings four;

But I love my one little lambie more!’

And the mother sheep and her little one,

Side by side lay down in the sun.

The lambie crept under her wool so warm.

But *my* little lambkin lies here—on my arm!

“I went to the kitchen, and what did I see

But the old grey cat, with her kittens three.

I heard her whispering, soft; said she,

‘My kittens with tails so cunningly curled,

Are the prettiest things there can be in the world!

The robin—he—and the old ewe—she

May love their babies exceedingly,—

But my kittens there—under the rocking-chair—

Oh, they are my treasures, my heart’s delight,

I love them at morning, at noon, and at night!

Which is the prettiest I cannot tell,

Which of the three—for the life of me,

For I love them all so well.

Now I’ll take up my kittens, the kittens I love,

And we’ll lie down together beneath the warm stove.’

So they all settled under the stove so warm;

And *my* little pussy lies here—on my arm.

“I went through the yard, and saw the old hen,

Go clucking about with her chickens ten.

She clucked, and she clucked, and she bustled away,

And what do you think I heard the hen say?

She said, ‘Surely the sun never did shine

On anything like to these chickens of mine!

You may hunt the full moon, and the stars, if you
please,

But you never will find ten such chickens as these,

I would not part with one of these,

Though the sheep and the cat should go down on
their knees;

No, not though the kitten could crow,

Or the lambie on two yellow legs could go!

Come, cluck away, chickies, you dear little things,

And nestle close, cosily, under my wings.’

So they all nestled under her wing so warm,

While *my* little chick nestles here on my arm.”

(14,552) MARYLEBONE.—I cannot but think that

ROOMS will **SELL** by **AUCTION**, at their **ROOMS**, King-street, Covent-garden, on **MONDAY**, Nov. 30th, and four following days, at Eleven o'clock, **JEWELLERY**, watches, plate, clocks, apparel, piece goods, furniture, wines, cigars, &c., being forfeited property, pledged, or upon which loans have been effected by special contract, under the Act of Parliament, in the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December, 1888, 1889, 1890, and 1891, and in years prior to 1888, with the following pawnbrokers, viz.:—Messrs. Attenborough, 72, Strand; Attenborough and Son, Fleet-street; Attenborough and Son, Newington-causeway; Arnold (late Warren), New-cross-road; Arnold, Kentish-town-road and High-road, Kilburn; Allworthy Bros., High-street, Camden-town; Allworthy Bros., King's-cross-road; Aldous, Berwick-street, Soho; Boshier, Falcon-road, Battersea; Barnett, St. George's-circus, Southwark; Cox, Wardour-street, Soho; Coleman and Tammedge, St. Augustine-square, Bristol; Clears, Goldhawk-road, Shepherd's-bush; Clears, Kew-road, Richmond; Dickinson, Clarence-street, Kingston-on-Thames; Fryett, Brixton-road; Fish, Amwell-street, Pentonville; Gill (exors. of), Hampstead-road; Gaydon, High-street, Walthamstow; Hawes and Son, Cranbourn-street, Leicester-square; Mann and Byford, Hoxton-street; Melnish, High-st., Notting-hill; Martin, Gray's-inn-rd.; Needes, Chapel-st., Edgware-rd.; Newman, Caledonian-road; Onley, Northgate-street, Gloucester; Onley, Southgate-street, Gloucester; Ohlson, Cold Harbour-lane, Brixton; Pryor and Son, London-road, Liverpool; Phillips, Wandsworth-road; Quait, High-street, Dartford, Kent; Richardson and Sons, Upper George-street, Bryanston-square; Richard and Davis, Thomas-street, Woolwich; Rowley, Ledbury-road, Bayswater; Smith, Tanning-street, Lowestoft; Sanderson, Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square; Smith, High-street, Kingsland; Smith, Harrow-road; Sharwood, St. John-street-road, Clerkenwell; Scudamore, Great Chapel-street, Westminster; Thomson, Ladbroke-grove-road, Notting-hill; Waterfield, Vauxhall-bridge-road; Warren, St. John's-road, H. xon; Warren, Evelina-road, Peckham; and goods deposited with them as security for loans, the periods for which have expired.

On view Saturday prior and mornings of sale.

City Auction Rooms, 38 and 39, Gracechurch-street, E.C.
—Established 1793.—Sales pursuant to Act of Parliament, 35 and 36 Vic.

MESSRS. JOHNSON, DYMOND, and SON will **SELL** by **AUCTION**, at their **ROOMS**, as above, on **MONDAY**, Nov. 30th, **WEDNESDAY**, Dec. 2nd, and **FRIDAY**, Dec. 4th, each day at Twelve o'clock, **DIAMOND**, **EMERALD**, and **BRILLIANT ORNAMENTS**, single stone and cluster diamond rings, ladies' and gentlemen's gold watches, and fashionable gold chains, several hundred ounces of modern and antique silver plate superior plated goods, and other valuable property; and on **MONDAY**, Nov. 30th, **TUESDAY**, Dec. 1, **WEDNESDAY**, Dec. 2nd, **THURSDAY**, Dec. 3rd, and **FRIDAY**, Dec. 4th, each day at Twelve o'clock, **SILK MERCERY**, **LINEN**, and **WOOLLEN DRAPERY**, ladies' and gentlemen's fashionable attire, household furniture, sewing-machines, cutlery, guns, revolvers, and miscellaneous property. The whole of the auction and other pledges, together with deposits in this week's

other such like villifying terms” on most of the gentry of the town. This was simply a string of falsehoods, a base accusation from one who could stoop to any meanness for a breath of praise.

Thus did the three witnesses, *Envy*, *Superstition*, and *Pickthank*, give evidence against Faithful. They stood on different ground, but they bore much the same testimony. They were governed by a malignity which would be satisfied with nothing but the death of Faithful, and the master-stroke of the last was evidently intended to operate strongly on the mind of the judge. We read: “When Pickthank had told his tale, the judge directed his speech to the prisoner at the bar, saying, ‘Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?’”

With much meekness Faithful asks, “May I speak a few words in my own defence?” He replies to each witness. In answer to *Mr. Envy*, he asserted that he opposed nothing but what was contrary to the Word of God and Christianity. In answer to *Mr. Superstition*, he declared he said only that in the worship of God a divine faith was required, that there could be none without a divine revelation, and that all else was a human faith and unprofitable to eternal life. In answer to *Mr. Pickthank*, he boldly affirmed that the princes of the town, with all the rabblement, his attendants, whom he had named, were more fit for “a being in hell” than in that town and country, adding, “and so the Lord have mercy upon me.”

My reader, in all this there is much we may

learn. The followers of *Envy*, *Superstition*, and *Pickthank* are living still. There never have been wanting those who have been ready to misrepresent the advocates of truth, the friends of Christ. We may not be subjected to such trials as fell to the lot of Faithful, but if we are as bold and as uncompromising as he was, we shall have our accusers. Let us pray for grace always to stand firm. "The noble army of martyrs" have been the very life of the Church, and their example is telling on the world still. Though we may escape their peril, may we possess their spirit, and meet the obloquy and reproaches of *the haters of good* with the assurance that we have chosen the good part, and that we shall be vindicated at the last great day.

3. THE JURY AND THEIR VERDICT.—The judge, in addressing the jury and laying down the law, after true legal fashion, quoted several precedents which might serve to guide them. He gave them the cases of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius, and applied them to the matter before them.

There could be but little doubt as to the verdict, for never was a jury so thoroughly packed. They might well all agree and bring in the prisoner guilty before the judge.

Mr. Blindman was the foreman, and he was supported by Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Lovelust, Mr. Live-loose, Mr. Heady, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-light, and Mr. Implacable.

Thus have the enemies of truth taken counsel

together. They may cherish very different sins and hold very different views, but as a body they are equally opposed to Christianity, and Blindman, their leader, proclaims its humble advocate as worthy of death. It was thus that they gathered about the Master, and shall the servant enjoy a better fate?

When we look at the names of these jurymen we are reminded that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” If we are *faithful* to our Lord we shall find it impossible to keep in with the world. Have we started on our heavenly journey? We shall do well to master this lesson. The hearts of the unregenerate are against us. We cannot win them, and let us take care they do not win us. When we feel surprised at the little influence which our views have upon others, let us call to mind Lord Hate-good and his twelve jurymen, and turn to the 20th verse of the 15th chapter of St. John’s Gospel—“Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.”

4. LASTLY, THE PRISONER AND HIS END.—Thus briefly is it described: “They therefore brought him out to do with him according to their law; first they scourged him, then they buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives; after that they stoned him with stones; then they pricked him with their swords; and last of all they burned him to ashes at the stake. Thus came Faithful to his end.”

So fell the martyr. True to his God, his death was a triumph. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do."

"Now I saw that there stood behind the multitude a chariot and a couple of horses waiting for Faithful; who, as soon as his adversaries had despatched him, was taken up into it, and straight was carried up through the clouds, with sound of trumpet, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate."

Yes, "*the nearest way.*" Great is the honour of Christian martyrdom. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints;" but can we doubt there are special laurels for those who are privileged to wear the martyr's crown? And how powerless after all is the blood-red hand of persecution. It can torture, inflict agony, apply the torch, or wield the axe, but it can do no more. And yet there is one thing more it can do, and that is—set the imprisoned spirit free and send it joyously home. The weapon which smote off the head of Paul only cut the string of life, and the fire which consumed Latimer only burnt it.

My reader, our chapter to-day may encourage every saint of God among us. They are words which are not the exclusive property of martyrs. "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Are you willing to suffer with Christ? then you shall reign with Him. Are you ready to carry your cross? then most surely you shall wear your crown. It is thus that Christ measures our love to Him. Oh what a joyous

thought is this. We have one near us—ever near us—who marks all our sorrows and prepares for us a crown in heaven. And as we meet the reproaches of “a world that lieth in wickedness,” let us know that it is that school in which our Father has placed us in which we have to learn lessons for eternity; let us be assured that every grief we feel, every tear we shed, every sorrow we bear, is all a part of the strange web, every thread of which has been woven by our Father’s hand; and, looking far beyond all the persecutions, afflictions, and troubles of this fleeting life, let us go forward with steady step and fixed eye to that glorious world where love alone can reign, and where there is joy evermore.

“ Silent, like men in solemn haste,
Girded wayfarers of the waste,
We pass out at the world’s wide gate,
Turning our backs on all its state;
We press along the narrow road
That leads to life, to bliss, to God.

We cannot and we would not stay;
We dread the snares that throng the way,
We fling aside the weight and sin,
Resolved the victory to win;
We know the peril, but our eyes
Rest on the splendour of the prize.

No idling now, no wasteful sleep,
From Christian toil our limbs to keep;
No shrinking from the desperate fight,
No thought of yielding or of flight,
No love of present gain or ease,
No seeking man nor self to please.

No sorrow for the loss of fame,
No dread of scandal on our name;
No terror for the world’s sharp scorn,

No wish that taunting to return ;
No hatred can our hatred move,
And enmity but kindles love.

'Tis but a little, and we come
To our reward, our crown, our home
Another year, it may be less,
And we have crossed the wilderness,
Finished the toil, the rest begun,
The battle fought, the triumph won.

We grudge not, then, the toil, the way ;
Its ending is the endless day !
We shrink not from these tempests keen,
With little of the calm between ;
We welcome each descending sun ;—
Ere morn, our joy may be begun !”



TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

MR. BY-ENDS AND HIS THREE FRIENDS.

“The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.”—

MATTHEW vi. 22.

“THE TRIAL AND MARTYRDOM OF FAITHFUL” formed our last subject; and a few words from our Allegory will place our hero before us again. “But as for Christian, he had some respite, and was remanded back to prison; so he there remained for a space; but He that over-rules all things, having the power of their rage in His own hand, so wrought it about that Christian for that time escaped them and went his way.”

Sadly and sorrowfully, it may be, Christian pursued his journey. The thought of Faithful's triumph would no doubt comfort him, but his friend's great gain did not make his own loss the less. But God

is ever with His people. Faithful's place was not to be left long unfilled. Christian was soon to have at his side one as loving, as constant, and as true.

“Now I saw in my dream that Christian went not forth alone; for there was one whose name was *Hopeful* (being so made by the beholding of Christian and Faithful, in their words and behaviour in their sufferings at the fair) who joined himself unto him; and, entering into a brotherly covenant, told him that he would be his companion. Thus one died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes to be a companion with Christian. This Hopeful also told Christian that there were many more men in the fair that would take their time and follow after.”

Thus “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” The candle which Ridley and Latimer lighted has not yet been put out, and, I have faith to believe, never shall be. The noble example of Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair had not been lost upon those who had witnessed it. Their brave conduct had impressed and inspired others. And has it not often been so in the history of the Church? Was it without reason that in that little prison library at Bedford God took care that Foxe's Book of Martyrs should have a place? I think not—Bunyan studied that good old book well, and if some of the trash of our day made way for it I am inclined to believe it would be better for us and for our children. We have fallen upon degenerate times, I fear, when the men who saved the Church of England can be, by professing Churchmen, vilified and

despised. It is a bad sign when our *faithful martyrs* are put in the back ground, and the first place given to those who maintain the doctrines which bore them to the stake, and who in their blindness would hand over the Church of their Protestant fathers to the embrace of the Church of Rome. But it shall not be. The old spirit is not dead yet.

“Sing, Faithful, sing, and let thy name survive,
For though they killed thee, thou art yet alive.”

And how true are the words of Matthew Henry—
“God buries His workmen, but He carries on His work.” Moses falls, but Joshua rises; *Faithful* dies, but *Hopeful* lives. Should not this cheer and comfort the individual believer? The one whose heart was bound up with his own is laid in the grave. The light of hope seems quenched within him. But “another Comforter” is found, and, roused to effort by loving counsel and example, the poor pilgrim of sorrow goes on his way rejoicing.

And should this not cheer and comfort the Christian who in sadness interprets the signs of the times? Never need we think the existence of one man, however, brave, holy, and good, essential to God’s cause or the true life of His Church. If the *Faithfuls* die the *Hopefuls* will be ready to step into their place. Let this serve to remove all our fears. The very means which God’s enemies employ to crush His truth are made means of promoting it. “As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house and hailing men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were

scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."—Acts viii. 3, 4. This was the lesson Christian learned. He lost one companion, but he gained another. To his *faith* now *hope* was added, and together the two friends pursued the heavenly journey.

Bunyan now brings other characters upon his stage. With the most marvellous skill he deals with *Mr. By-ends and his three friends*. The portraits of *By-ends*, *Hold-the-World*, *Money-love*, and *Save-all* are done to the life. I hope you will read the entire passage with great care. It is full of power and as full of interest. I can do little more than dwell upon those points which appear to me to be deserving of special attention.

In all we shall be strongly reminded of our Lord's words which stand at the head of our chapter, "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Our remarks will shape themselves under these two heads:

1. BY-ENDS, THE TYPE OF THE DOUBLE-FACED IN OUR CHURCHES.

2. HOLD-THE-WORLD, MONEY-LOVE, AND SAVE-ALL, THE CONGENIAL FRIENDS OF SUCH PERSONS.

1. BY-ENDS, THE TYPE OF THE DOUBLE-FACED IN OUR CHURCHES.—As Christian and Hopeful "got out of the fair, they overtook one that was going before them whose name was *By-ends*." They entered into conversation with him, and from what follows we learn that he came from the town of *Fair-*

speech and was going to the Celestial City, but it must be observed he “told them not his name.” This at once stamps the character as intended to place before us a professing Christian. He is one avowedly on the way to heaven. His *speech* was *fair*, but he carried a double face, and dared not tell his name. By-ends told the Pilgrims that in this town of Fair-speech he had many rich kindred—almost the whole town. He thus particularized “my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech, from whose ancestors that town first took its name: also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother’s own brother by father’s side: and, to tell you the truth, I am a gentlemen of good quality; yet my great grandfather was but a waterman, looking one way and rowing another, and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.” Moreover, his wife was Lady Feigning’s daughter, most accomplished in her family art, and there were “two small points” in which their joint religion differed from that of “the stricter sort.” “First, we never strive against wind and tide; secondly, we are always most zealous when Religion goes in his silver slippers. We love much to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines, and the people applaud him.” All this while By-ends never mentioned his name. Christian expressed his belief aside to Hopeful that it was By-ends of Fair-speech; adding “and if it be he, we have as very a knave in our company as dwelleth in all these parts.” At Hopeful’s suggestion Christian asked their double-

faced companion "Is not your name Mr. By-ends of Fair-speech?" By-ends admitted this was his nickname and that he bore it as a matter of reproach. Christian then inquired if he had not given occasion for it. Nothing can exceed the ingenuity of the reply. "Never! never! the worst that ever I did, to give them an occasion to give me this name, was that I had always the luck to jump in my judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it was; and my chance was to get thereby. But if things are thus cast upon me, let me count them a blessing; but let not the malicious load me therefore with reproach." Christian then told him that he feared he deserved his name; and when By-ends assured his fellow-travellers that whatever they might imagine they would find him "a fair company keeper," Christian plainly told him that he could only join them under certain conditions. "If you will go with us you must go against wind and tide You must also own Religion in his rags as well as in his silver slippers; and stand by him too when bound in iron, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause." On this By-ends accused Christian of lording it over his faith and interfering with his liberty. Christian insisted on the terms, and, accordingly, By-ends, declaring that he would never desert old principles which he found so harmless and profitable, went along by himself.

How exceedingly instructive is all this. We see in this man one who was professedly religious but who was entirely swayed by mean and sordid motives and the love of this present world. I have

no doubt in very much of the keen satire of this description we have no imperfect sketch of Bunyan's own times. He lived in an age which was the most disgraceful recorded in English history. As we know the Restoration ushered in a period in which all evangelical religion was despised, and little but debauchery, drunkenness, and sin prevailed. It was in the dissolute, lying, and unprincipled reign of Charles the Second that the most intolarent acts were passed which ever disgraced the Statute-book of England; and it was in that reign that Bunyan, a fellow-sufferer with some of the noblest and best men that ever lived, was thrown into Bedford gaol.

Much of the persecution of this melancholy period was carried on in the sacred name of Religion. The generation was one of the most unblushing worldliness. The god of this world reigned supremely. "The Restoration," writes Bishop Burnett, "brought with it the throwing off the very professions of virtue and piety; and all ended in entertainments and drunkenness which overran the three Kingdoms."

But the family of By-ends, alas, has not been confined to any one period of Church history. There have always been those whose eyes have been evil (Matt. vi. 23), those who, like the waterman, have looked one way, rowed another, and grown rich in consequence. There have always been thousands who have floated with the stream, never against wind and tide, been most zealous when Religion has gone in silver slippers, and most willing to walk with

him in the street when the sun has shone and the people have applauded him.

My reader, none can estimate the injury which these double-faced members have inflicted upon the Church. They are the miserable caricaturists of a Religion which demands Repentance, Faith, and Holiness, a spirit far removed from that of this world, and a lofty principle of action which neither courts the praise nor fears the frown of man. These are the people who are so grasping in trade and so keen at a bargain that it becomes a puzzle to see wherein they differ from their neighbour who never places his foot within the house of God. These are the people whose faith is that of the Pharisees, most careful to strain out the gnats, but possessing marvellous ability in the way of swallowing the camels—people who cast in much into the treasury of God, but leave the poor relation unhelpt and the house bills unpaid. Such religion is vain. What is wanted is a homage to truth, whether it is clothed in rags or goes in golden or silver slippers—a firm, holy resolution to do the right whatever may follow—a face which carries honesty of purpose and nobility of soul in its every feature—a calm conviction that a crust with Christ is better than a fortune without Him—in short, a prayerful effort to glorify God in everything. As a contemporary of Bunyan—the sweet poet George Herbert—puts it :

“Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see ;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for Thee.

A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold ;
For that which God does touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

Having now so far finished with By-ends as the type of the double-faced of our Churches, I advance to our second point.

2. HOLD-THE-WORLD, MONEY-LOVE, AND SAVE-ALL, THE CONGENIAL FRIENDS OF SUCH PERSONS.—Nothing can excel the quiet humour and rich satire of the passage which introduces these men to our notice. "Now I saw in my dream that Christian and Hopeful forsook him (that is By-ends) and kept their distance from him : but one of them looking back saw three men following Mr. By-ends, and behold, as they came up with him, he made them a very low congee ; and they also gave him a compliment. The men's names were Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all ; men that Mr. By-ends had formerly been acquainted with ; for in their minority they were schoolfellows, and were taught by one Mr. Gripeman, a schoolmaster in Love-gain, which is a market town in the country of Coveting, in the north. This schoolmaster taught them the art of getting, either by violence, cozenage, flattery, lying, or by putting on a guise of religion ; and these four gentlemen had attained much of the

art of their master, so that they could each of them have kept such a school themselves."

In these men we see a company of religionists who for the promotion of their own interests are prepared to adopt any policy. Carefully reading their conversation, we shall see certain marks which distinguish their race, and while perhaps Bunyan's intention was to satirize the prevailing hypocrisy of the times in which he lived, there is a great deal which has a severe application in every age of the world. We see in these men—

An underlying principle of selfishness.—They wished to be thought on pilgrimage, but they had no sympathy with Christian and Hopeful who were "so rigid" and were so in love with their own notions that they would not have the company of any who differed from them. Their creed consisted in waiting for wind and tide—in taking all advantages to secure life and estate—in following religion when it walks in golden slippers, in sunshine, and with applause—in making hay when the sun shines—and in securing the largest amount of God's good blessings. We see further in these men—

Wonderful readiness in self-vindication.—They could quote Scripture for their conduct. They were told to be "wise as serpents," and they were so. God sends both rain and sunshine, and why should they not be content to have fine weather with them? God has bestowed upon us the good things of this life, surely he meant us to keep them for His sake? Abraham and Solomon grew rich in religion, and Job says that a good man "shall lay up gold as dust."

If it be so, what poor fools Christian and Hopeful must be who would rush on their journey in all weathers, hazard all for God, uphold their notions though all other men were against them, and follow Religion even in rags and contempt !

Thus could these self-righteous Pharisees pervert the truth and misapply Scripture as a cover for their sin. They knew no qualms of conscience. In their eyes they had both Scripture and Reason on their side. We see, lastly, in these men—

Perfect willingness to do evil that good may come.—By-ends propounds a question. It is whether a man—a minister or a tradesman—may not lawfully become remarkably zealous in religion for temporal advantages and yet be a right honest man. Money-love undertakes to reply. He imagines the case of a *minister* seeking to better his living. He argues that he is quite justified in being studious, preaching more frequently and zealously, and, if the temper of his people require it, in altering some of his principles, should he have a call, and yet be an honest man. And he gives his reasons. The greater benefice is lawful and is set before him by providence—being more studious and a more zealous preacher he becomes a better man—and in deserting some of his principles to serve his people he shows that he is of a self-denying temper, of a sweet and winning deportment, and so more fit for the ministerial functions. Money-love decides the matter in much the same way concerning *the tradesman*. He may become religious that he may mend his market, or get a rich wife, or bring better customers to his shop.

And for very obvious reasons. "1. To become religious is a virtue by what means soever a man becomes so. 2. Nor is it unlawful to get a rich wife; or more custom to my shop. 3. Besides, the man that gets these by becoming religious gets that which is good, of them that are good, by becoming good himself. So then here is a good wife, and good customers, and good gain, and all these by becoming religious, which is a good and profitable design." All highly applauded Mr. Money-love's answer, and, because they thought no one would be able to contradict it, they resolved to assail Christian and Hopeful with it. As a matter of policy it was decided that old Mr. Hold-the-World should make the attack. As soon as they came up to the pilgrims, after a short salutation Mr. Hold-the-World propounded the question to them and bade them answer it if they could.

Christian replied. He showed them that if it be unlawful to follow Christ for loaves, how much more is it abominable to make Him and religion a stalking horse to get and enjoy the world. He declared also, that we do not find any other than heathens, hypocrites, devils, and witches that are of this opinion. He pointed out how this principle of selfishness had been the spring of Hamor and Shechem's cruel conduct; how it animated the hypocritical Pharisees when they made long prayers and devoured widows' houses; and how it was the cloak by which Judas covered his design; and how it moved Simon the Sorcerer to desire the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, he declared that the man who takes up religion

for the world will throw away religion for the world, as Judas did; and he pronounced the answer which Money-love had given as heathenish, hypocritical, and devilish, adding, "and your reward will be according to your works."

Thus was their flimsy argument demolished, and they stood staring one upon another.

My reader, let us take care we do not deceive ourselves with any such reasonings. This principle of selfishness lies at the root of this world's policy, and it is hateful in God's sight. If our conduct be regulated by such unscriptural maxims let us not flatter ourselves with the idea we are going the same way as the true-hearted pilgrim of Zion. Our eye must be single if our whole body is to be full of light. Our treasure is in heaven, and we must live as those who know that it is there. We must set our faces against anything like *money-love*, or *holding the world*, or *saving all* with the view of hoarding up that which was given to us to be wisely used. Let us detest every path that is off the straight road of truth and honesty—the *by-ends* which teach men, not to seek godliness as the highest gain, but to make worldly gain of godliness. God grant us the spirit of Jesus Christ. He could move amidst the busy scenes of this world without contracting a stain of sin. Corrupt and sinful as we are, by divine grace we may and should follow the steps of His holy life, and remembering how the mightiest have fallen, let us pray for needed strength and tread with a firm step the true road to honour, prosperity, happiness, and heaven.

“In search of enjoyment I wandered in vain,
With a void in my bosom that nothing could fill ;
For mirth's gayest smile was succeeded by pain,
And the sweet cup of pleasure proved bitterness still.
The young days of fancy rolled rapidly by,
And I shrunk with dismay from the future's dark gloom,
Where the clay fettered spirit must mourn till it die,
And man has no rest but the rest of the tomb.

But now I have heard of a loftier crown—
Of a Kingdom unfading—a glory divine ;
No longer I ask for a worldly renown,
But, how shall this Kingdom of glory be mine ?
Let my strength turn to weakness—my honour to shame—
The reproach of the Cross be my *earthly* reward ;
All—all shall be welcome for one blessed name,
The lowly disciple of Jesus the Lord.”



TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

DEMAS.

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”—1 TIM. vi. 9.

IN writing these words the apostle St. Paul is enforcing the great lesson of contentment. He would warn his youthful brother in the ministry of a rock on which many thousands had made shipwreck of their souls. The desire to become rich appears to be restricted to no single age in the history of either the Church or the world. We know the deep sorrow with which St. Paul informed Timothy in his Second Epistle of the fall of Demas. He was a professor of religion. He had started well, and for a time had gone on well. But a snare was laid in his path by the great enemy of souls, and it proved too strong for him. His decision gave way, his resolution vanished, and the brief record

has come down as a warning for the Church to the end of time. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

And we cannot suppose this man stood alone. Such cities as Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi could have supplied, I fear, many like him. The apostles could have given sad evidence of the influence of the world on these early churches. And the same danger has existed in every age. Our subject to-day shows us that the times of Bunyan were no exception. And ministers in our own day tell precisely the same tale. Indeed, from the peculiar circumstances of this later age—an age of abounding luxury and immense competition—we have probably more to depress and sadden us on this account than those of any preceding generation. Every class has departed from the frugality and simplicity of its forefathers. With the progress of civilization and the advancement of the arts of life multitudes have been drawn into the snare, and the consequence is that the expense of living is greatly increased, and the young are brought up in belief that "the one thing needful" is *money*. Need we be surprised that the piety of churches should decline? Shall we wonder if many a Demas should be found who has loved this present world? It seems to me that here is the great reason for the prevailing coldness of our churches over which so many mourn. Worldliness has eaten into their vitality. The age has thoroughly corrupted them. The Spirit of God has withdrawn, it may be, from them. "They that will be rich (that is, determine to be rich) fall into

temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

This brings us to our story, and will serve to introduce to us the solemn and important subject which is to occupy us to-day. Christian and Hopeful, relieved of "Mr. By-ends and his company," pursued their journey.

The portion of our Allegory now to engage our attention may be arranged under these two heads:—

1. A TEMPTATION THEY MET.
2. SOME LESSONS THEY LEARNED.

1. A TEMPTATION THEY MET.—They are first permitted to have a brief interval of pleasant travel. "Then Christian and Hopeful outwent them again, and went till they came to a delicate plain called Ease; where they went with much content; but that plain was but narrow, so they were quickly got over it."

There are such places on the rough and rocky road to heaven. It is not quite all fighting with the believer. He has toil very wearing, experiences very bitter, hardships very severe, but, like the oasis in the African desert, there are bright and happy spots on the way—"times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Such are very acceptable to the toiling pilgrim. He spends a little time there "with much content." He thinks over the difficulties he has conquered and the dangers he has passed. He meditates in calmness of spirit on that redeeming love which no backsliding could lessen and no forget-

fulness impair—the quenchless, unchanging, undying love of Jesus. But the plain, pleasant and acceptable though it may be, is but *narrow*, and must be *quickly* got over. The delicate plain of *Ease* is a dangerous place. Like that “pleasant arbour” half way up the Hill of Difficulty, in which Christian fell into a slumber, its cool shade and balmy air is likely enough to draw the weary traveller to sleep.

There are times in the believer's history when his sense of joy and peace is so complete that he finds his satisfaction in himself instead of his Saviour. The consequence is inevitable. He takes sleep where he ought to get only refreshment—a drowsy prayerless spirit creeps in upon him—and he drops into the arms of carnal security. Such relapses are common. At these times the world, sin, and self gain the mastery. Prayer becomes a cold and fitful thing, communion with God a mere form, the Bible always a neglected book, the life of the soul a matter of small interest. Be on your guard at such times. Bunyan, I have no doubt, had seen many drawn into these snares. It is not without reason he makes Christian and Hopeful get over this narrow plain quickly. Such periods in our spiritual history are not meant to last long. Never must we forget we are on a journey and have to get forward. Never must we forget we are soldiers and must endure hardness. Never must we forget our work is to fight and that the rest is to come hereafter. God gives us breathing time, but no sleeping time. He gives us “times of refreshing,” but no times for spiritual sloth. Let us beware of ease. Let us ever

be watchful and wakeful. There is no retreat like the bosom of Christ—no resting place like the throne of God.

“Then let us seek our heavenly home
The rest for us in store ;
The land whence pilgrims never roam
Where soldiers war no more.”

“Now at the further side of that plain was a little hill, called Lucre, and in that hill a silver mine, which some of them that had formerly gone that way, because of the rarity of it, had turned aside to see ; but, going too near the brink of the pit, the ground being deceitful under them, broke, and they were slain : some also had been maimed there, and could not to their dying day be their own men again.

“Then I saw in my dream that a little off the road, over against the silver mine, stood Demas, gentleman-like, to call to passengers to come and see : who said to Christian and his fellow, Ho ! turn aside hither, and I will show you a thing.”

Demas tries to induce Christian and Hopeful to turn aside and examine the silver mine of the little hill of Lucre. How craftily he encouraged them. “Here is a silver mine, and some are digging in it for treasure ; if you will come, with a little pains you may richly provide for yourselves.” Hopeful was almost ensnared by this specious invitation, but Christian sternly answered, “Not I ; I have heard of this place before now, and how many have there been slain ; and, besides, that treasure is a snare to those that seek it ; for it hindereth them in their pilgrimage.” Well might Demas blush when he told

Christian that the way was not very dangerous except to those that were careless. Wisely did Christian decide, "Let us not stir a step, but still keep on our way." In vain did Demas renew his invitation. Christian boldly rebuked him. "Demas, thou art an enemy to the right ways of the Lord of this way, and hast already been condemned for thine own turning aside, by one of his Majesty's judges, and why seekest thou to bring us into the like condemnation? Besides, if we all turn aside, our Lord the King will certainly hear thereof, and will there put us to shame, where we would stand with boldness before him." All this while Demas deceitfully withheld his name. He further cried out that he was one of their fraternity, and if they would tarry a little he also would walk with them. Christian then charged him with his name, and he replied, "Yes, my name is Demas; I am the son of Abraham." But Christian was not to be deceived. He assigned to him a very different parentage. "I know you; Gehazi was your great grandfather, and Judas your father, and you have trod in their steps: it is but a devilish prank that thou usest; thy father was hanged for a traitor, and thou deservest no better reward. Assure thyself that when we come to the King we will tell him of this thy behaviour." "Thus," says the Dreamer, "they went their way."

How melancholy is the record of By-ends and his companions. When they came up they went over at once to Demas. Christian was right. He had told Hopeful that By-ends would turn in to see

the mine, for, said he, "his principles lead him that way, and a hundred to one but he perish there." And so it proved. No one knew for certain what became of By-ends and his friends, but "they never were seen again in the way."

How solemn and instructive is all this. The absorbing desire for wealth is one of the strongest temptations which beset the Christian life. We must notice the mine was not absolutely in the way to the Celestial City. It was "a little off the road." If we engage in any unlawful pursuit we must *turn aside*. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present evil world." Observe the ground was deceitful. It broke under the feet of those who trod upon it. Some persons were slain and some were so maimed that they were injured to their dying day.

How beautifully consistent is this with the teaching of the Word of God! Does not our Lord speak in the Parable of the Sower, of "the deceitfulness of riches?" Does not the apostle declare in our text, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men *in destruction and perdition*?" Has not the inordinate pursuit of riches led many a child of God into sin, injured his character for life, and sent him in sorrow to his grave? Let the Churches of Christ bear their melancholy testimony to the thousands who have been ruined by the love of lucre. The tempter has come to them with soft speeches. Others were digging in the mine for treasure, and with very little pains they could enrich themselves. The voice has been the

voice of Jacob but the hand has been the hand of Esau. They have "turned aside," and sacrificed health, peace, and reputation. They have drunk down the sweet but poisoned draught. On this fatal rock they have well nigh if not quite made shipwreck of the soul.

Oh, these silver mines! What damage have they inflicted on the Churches of Christ! "They that *will* be rich" are not confined to the ranks of the world. Members of Christian Churches, long distinguished for piety and liberality in the cause of God, have turned aside, and have been maimed to their dying day. They have, like Demas, claimed fraternity with Christians. They have made their boast of ancestral piety. But the inordinate pursuit of wealth has "hindered them in their pilgrimage"—the love of money has quenched all love to the cause of God. They have talked and sung about renouncing the world, and have permitted all the sympathies they have had to be bound up with it. Railway shares, bubble companies, tempting advertisements, have turned them aside. They have joined in the race after wealth—the ground has broken under them—and, branded with fraud and falsehood, the spoilers of the widow and the orphan, they have sunk into their graves exiled from the land of their birth, and loaded with the reproaches of those who have been impoverished by their deeds.

Bunyan knew that the character of Demas was far too common in the Church of Christ. With the eye of a prophet he saw how worldliness would eat into the vitality of Christian communities. He saw

many a reputation wrecked on the rock of "filthy Lucre." He beheld thousands slain in the silver mine. He would bid us be watchful over the tendencies which lurk in our hearts. He would warn us against trying to serve God and Mammon. He would urge us to pray against "the love of money" which is "the root of all evil," reminding us that those who have coveted after it, have "erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Never was the warning more needed than now. We have thousands who are the miserable followers of Demas. They profess godliness, make a profession of religion, but they show in every action of their lives that they love "this present world." And they are the tempters of others. Over against the silver mine they stand, and cry to poor pilgrims on their road to the Celestial City, "Ho, turn aside hither, and I will show you a thing." My reader, pray earnestly to abide by Christian's decision, "Let us stir not a step, but keep on our way." Riches, and honour, and rank, and influence are not half so necessary as some suppose. Those who have them carry a load of cares with them, and "pierce themselves through with many sorrows." It is a great disgrace to be grasping, selfish and unjust, but it is no disgrace to be poor. It is dishonourable to have an account at the banker's which has been accumulated by "the tricks of the trade;" but it is the highest honour "having food and raiment therewith to be content."

May God keep us from the desire to be rich.

There is no growth in grace with this passion predominant. If wealth be our portion, let us feel we are stewards, and lay it out for Christ. If poverty be our lot, let us bear it as those who being rich in faith are rich indeed. Thus shall we be made superior to all outward circumstances, and this world with its ten thousand joys and sorrows will prove "the training school for heaven." But, once more to Christian and Hopeful.

2. SOME LESSONS THEY LEARNED.—On the other side of the plain they came to an old monument by the highway side. It appeared as if it had been a woman transformed into the shape of a pillar. After looking for a long time at it, Hopeful espied some writing in an unusual hand above upon the head, which Christian, after a laying of letters together, found to be "Remember Lot's Wife." He read it to Hopeful, and they concluded that it was the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned as the punishment for covetousness. This sight coming so soon after the temptation from Demas might well stir up great searchings of heart. Well might Christian say, "Ah! my brother! this is a seasonable sight: it came opportunely to us after the invitation which Demas gave us to come over to view the hill of Lucre; and had we gone as he desired us, and as thou wast inclined to do, my brother, we had, for aught I know, been made like this woman, ourselves a spectacle for those that shall come after to behold." Hopeful could only express his deep sorrow for the folly of which he had been guilty. He declared his sin to

have been greater than that of Lot's wife, and he meekly added, "Let grace be adored, and let me be ashamed that ever such a thing should be in mine heart."

Thus did our Pilgrims gather up a lesson on their way. They recorded their sense of God's grace, and love, and goodness. And may we not do the same? Cannot we think of those who have been ensnared by the love of money, and who stand in our memories the sad monuments of the divine displeasure? Cannot we recall many who have been tempted to turn aside and conform to the world, who have forsaken the narrow path to our grief and sorrow, and who now stand forth as beacons to show how deeply men can fall when they cherish easily be-setting sins, and drive the Spirit of God from their hearts?"

And Christian would gather up another lesson—one for the time to come. Lot's wife escaped one judgment—the destruction of Sodom—but she was destroyed by another. Hopeful saw the lesson at once. "True, and she may be to us both caution and example: caution that we should shun her sin; or a sign of what judgment will undertake such as shall not be prevented by this caution." He spoke of the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the two hundred and fifty men that perished; but his greatest wonder was how Demas and his fellows could stand looking for that treasure which was the cause of the woman being turned into a pillar of salt, and while she stood so near to them that they must see her whenever they lifted up their eyes. Poor Hopeful marvelled how they could act so, with such

a terrible example ever before them. Christian admitted that it was a thing to be wondered at, but he regarded it as arguing that their hearts had grown desperate. Moreover, fortifying himself with the case of the men of Sodom, who were "sinners exceedingly" notwithstanding all the kindness of God to their fruitful land, he wound up by saying, "And it is most rationally to be concluded that such, even such as these are, that shall sin in the sight, yea, and that too in despite of the examples that are set continually before them to caution them to the contrary, must be partakers of severest judgments." The great lesson sank into the heart of Hopeful. "Doubtless thou hast said the truth; but what a mercy is it that neither thou, but especially I, am not made myself this example! This ministereth occasion to us to thank God, to fear before Him and always to remember Lot's wife."

And if Christian's conclusion was a right one, I fear that among ourselves thousands of hearts have grown desperate. How few are impressed by the sad falls of professing Christians. They stand like pillars of salt, and yet men beneath their very shadow are looking for the treasure. They dig in the silver mine—spend all their strength and peace that they may grow rich—though whenever they lift their eyes they see the image of the miserable lingerer at Sodom's overthrow, and read the warning of her sad history, "Remember Lot's wife."

And surely we may join in that grateful thought which came up from Hopeful's heart, "It is of the Lord's mercies that *we* are not consumed." If we

are not examples of the victory of a cherished sin, we can only "Let grace be adored."

Our strength, my reader, is not in ourselves. If we are able to keep the world beneath our feet, if we are preserved from any undue pursuit of wealth, it is all owing to the restraining and preventing grace of God. Let us ever rely on the promised presence of our Lord with His people. Let us remember our place of safety is at His feet. Let us, in short, confront the world, remembering that "out of weakness we are made strong," and, whether we grapple with its duties or carry its cares, find refuge in the everlasting love of God.

"To have each day the thing I wish,
Lord, that seems best to me ;
But not to have the thing I wish,
Lord, that seems best to Thee.

'Tis hard to say without a sigh,
Lord, let Thy will be done ;
'Tis hard to say, My will is Thine,
And Thine is mine alone.

Most truly then Thy will be done,
When mine, O Lord, is cross'd ;
'Tis good to see my plans o'erthrown,
My ways in Thine all lost.

Whate'er Thy purpose be, O Lord,
In things or great or small,
Let each minutest part be done,
That Thou mayst still be all.

In all the little things of life,
Thyself, Lord, may I see ;
In little and in great alike,
Reveal Thy love to me.

So shall my undivided life
To Thee, my God, be given ;
And all this earthly course below
Be one dear path to heaven."

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

DOUBTING CASTLE AND GIANT DESPAIR.

“They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.”—ISAIAH lix. 8.

THE life of a Christian is not the life of a tourist whose eyes are gladdened every day with some fresh scene of wonder and beauty, but rather that of a soldier in time of war, face to face with foes, and retiring only at brief intervals to take breath, and gather strength for the next conflict. The life of a Christian is as varied as an April day. At one moment the sun shines brightly, and he goes forward singing like a bird, at the next the clouds gather, the rain-drops fall, and the garment of praise is exchanged for the spirit of heaviness. This is “the common lot.” The wonderful Allegory we are considering conveys to us this truth. We read it in our own lives, and we read it in the lives of others.

And the cause of this vicissitude is altogether in ourselves. God does not change. We change, but

with Him is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Hence the need of watchfulness, vigilance, wakefulness. The reason why we have not perpetual spring in our hearts is that we welcome the chilling frosts of fear and doubt. "My life is hid with Christ in God" is a text of Scripture to us, and no more. Were it but the confession of grateful souls touched with the power of love it would be the cry of victory. This is one of the great lessons which we gather from Pilgrim's Progress.

The chapter on which we now enter commences with "the river of God," and ends with the escape from Doubting Castle out of the hands of Giant Despair. Our pilgrims were permitted to share a brief season of pure enjoyment and perfect rest. As we saw in the last chapter, journeying time is not sleeping time. The plain of *Ease* is but narrow and must be quickly got over. But *there are* a few sleeping places for weary Pilgrims—times of special refreshment, when the sweet consolations of the Spirit are abundant, and precious assurance is fully realized—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." These are seasons of such blessed calm that the very breath of heaven seems to have settled on the heart. Seldom indeed do we possess this "peace of God." Thus has it been described—"God Almighty is the mother, and the soul is the tired child; and He folds it in His arms, dispels its fears, and lulls it to repose, saying, 'Sleep, my darling; sleep.' The mother's arms encircle but one, but God clasps every yearning soul to His bosom, and gives it the peace which passeth

understanding, beyond the reach of care or storm." There are such unruffled hours in the life of the believer, when the streams from the river of God's love find their way into his heart, when the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to him, and when in his pilgrimage he cannot see either a cloud in the sky or a rough place on the road. Thus our Pilgrims ate of the fruit of the trees, drank of the water of the river, and enjoyed a brief season of sweet repose. And thus too the believer says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." Precious hours are these. They give us strength by the way. But the scene soon changes. What follows reminds us of the words of Isaiah, already quoted as our text—"They have made paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." The points presented to us are:—

1. CROOKED PATHS.
2. LOST PEACE.

1. CROOKED PATHS.—"They have made them crooked paths." Our Dreamer tells us that Christian and Hopeful had not travelled far before the river and the way for a time parted, at which they were not a little sorry, yet they durst not go out of the way. The way from the river was rough and their feet were tender, so, like as it was with Israel on their wilderness journey, their souls were much "discouraged because of the way." Perhaps some may ask here—Why this sudden reverse? Why this change in their condition? Why should the river

and the way be parted, and bring them into this perplexity and trouble?

My reader, it is possible for Christians, like plants, to have too much sunshine. The storm which sweeps with desolating force along the valley gives strength to the oak of the forest. It is in conflict and trial that the faith of the apostles was proved, and "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" brought to perfection. There is much in the school of Sanctification which we cannot understand. Left to ourselves we should like to build tabernacles on the Mount and dwell there for ever, or, with our Pilgrims, walk by the river drinking its water and eating of the fruit of the trees which grow upon its banks, but we must be willing to see the river and the way parted for a time—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." It will be found hereafter that our tears did more for us than our smiles, and that sorrow was a better schoolmaster than joy. "We walk by faith, not by sight," and reliance is its very essence. This is why the sunshine of our Christian life is so often succeeded by rain. Faith wants room to move. Our Heavenly Father would see if it can stand the fire. If it be of the right sort, like the metal, it will be the better for it, and, like the blacksmith's arm, it will get strength by exercise.

This is why the river and the way for a time parted. Our Pilgrims went forward wishing for a

better way. Gradually the effects of the refreshing season they had enjoyed lost hold of them, and the spirit of watchfulness departing, they were soon weak enough in the presence of temptation. On the left hand side of the road there was a meadow and stile, and that meadow is called *By-path Meadow*.

“Discouraged because of the way” as they were, all the doubts which Hopeful expressed were soon disposed of, and getting over the stile into the path, they found it very easy to their feet. And a new leader makes his appearance. They saw a man walking before them, and his name was *Vain-Confidence*. They asked him whither that way led. He told them to the Celestial Gate. With this they were satisfied and followed him. The darkness of the night gathered round them and they lost sight of their guide. Vain-Confidence going on fell into a deep pit which was on purpose there made by the prince of these grounds to catch vain-glorious fools withal, and was dashed to pieces by his fall. Thus perished Vain-Confidence—Christian and his fellow called, but they heard no more than his dying groan. Troubles thickened on the Pilgrims. They saw clearly that they were out of the way. The rain descended, the thunder roared, the lightning flashed, and “the water rose amain.”

How truly had Christian and Hopeful “*made them crooked paths*.” For the sake of a little ease to their feet they had forsaken the right road, and, led into the dark by Vain-Confidence, but, seeing the error into which they had fallen, nothing remained

for them but to retrace their steps. And the Dreamer adds: "Then I thought that it is easier going out of the way when we are in it, than going in when we are out. Yet they adventured to go back; but it was so dark, and the flood was so high, that, in their going back, they had like to have been drowned nine or ten times."

Oh these "*crooked paths*," these "*By-path Meadows*:" What sorrows have God's people brought upon themselves by reason of them! Oh, these victims of *Vain-Confidence*: how narrowly have they escaped destruction!

How full of grief were those words of St. Paul addressed to the Galatian Church—"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him who called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel." And how many have forsaken the path of holy obedience for the By-path Meadows of vain-confidence.

It was so with our first parents who, forgetful of God's plain command, ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, because Vain-Confidence told them it was "good for food, pleasant for the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." It was so with Moses who was directed to *speak* to the rock. Vain-Confidence led him to the By-path Meadow and bade him *smite* it. He fell into sin and was shut out of the Land of Promise. It was so with Hezekiah when he showed his treasures to the Babylonish embassy. Vain-Confidence led him into By-path Meadow. He ought to have desired "honour which cometh from God only," but he sought that which a heathen prince could give him. Reproof followed and sorrow of

heart with it. The prediction fell upon the ears of the vain-glorious monarch. These very treasures should one day be carried into Babylon. "Nothing shall be left, saith the Lord."

And how often has this been the experience of God's people. The story of Christian and Hopeful led by Vain-Confidence into By-path Meadow explains all their declensions and dark hours. Bunyan drew upon his own history. He writes somewhat to this effect: "I have wondered much at this one thing, that, though God doth visit my soul with never so blessed discoveries of Himself, yet I have been so filled with darkness afterwards, that I could not so much as once conceive what that comfort was with which I was refreshed."

Have we not found our way into By-path Meadow? I can only answer for myself and allow that it has been my unhappy lot. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me."

Whenever we forget this truth and seek for strength, vigour, refreshment, comfort elsewhere but in Christ, we are led by Vain-Confidence into By-path Meadow. It is not always the neglect of duties which brings us there. It may be the study of our Bibles, it may be attendance upon God's house; it may be in fasting and devotional exercises, for if these things are substituted for the simple reliance of the soul on the Saviour we are in By-path Meadow. God keep us from all "*crooked paths.*" Christ is *the Way.*

“Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life,
And hearts that, with presumption rife,
Would seek through other means to gain
Light, Truth, and Life, but toil in vain :
Thy hand alone controls our way,
Thy Truth bids darkness turn to day ;
And they alone for ever stand,
Whose names are written on Thy Hand.”

2. LOST PEACE.—“Whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.” “Neither could they, with all the skill they had get again to the stile that night. Wherefore at last lighting under a little shelter, they sat down there till day-break : but being weary they fell asleep.”

What a picture of the soul falling into guilty slumber. Had but the pilgrims driven sleep from them they would have escaped all the consequences of their sinful sloth. As it was, instead of using prayer and pains, seeking help from God and sparing no effort, they found a little shelter and fell asleep.

My dear reader, to settle down in carnal security is to be on dangerous ground. You are close by *Doubting Castle* and *Giant Despair*. It was thus with Christian and Hopeful. Sleeping when they ought to have been praying and watching, they were seized by the Giant, charged with being trespassers, driven before him into his castle, and put into a very dark dungeon. Their misery is thus described : “Here then they lay, from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread, or drop of drink or light, or any to ask how they did : they were, therefore, here in evil case, and were far from

friends and acquaintance. Now in this place Christian had double sorrow, because it was through his unadvised counsel that they were brought into this distress."

I must leave you to read the narrative of all that occurred to them while shut up in this dismal place. I can only glance at it and try to gather the spiritual instruction which Bunyan intended to convey.

You observe the Giant had a wife whose name was *Diffidence*. Some have been puzzled by this name. She was a bad, wicked woman. As Dr. Cheever says : Mrs. Diffidence ought rather to have been called Dame Desperation or Desperate Resolution ; for she seems, if anything, the more stubborn genius of the two."

Bunyan, who is so singularly happy in his names, has been thought in fault here—*Diffidence* being a term only used to signify modesty. But if any are wrong it is ourselves—certainly not Bunyan. The word *Diffidence*, according to the Latin, from which it is derived, means *want of faith*. It may be want of faith in ourselves, as in modesty or bashfulness, or it may be want of faith in another, as in unbelief or distrust, the latter being the signification intended by Bunyan. It is quite possible that this was its popular meaning in Bunyan's day. Words in course of years change their signification. This may be an instance.

Diffidence therefore, the wife of the Giant, represents *Unbelief* or *Distress*, very properly joined with *Despair*. She was the great counsellor in all

the cruelties inflicted upon the wretched prisoners. She and her husband held a consultation during the darkness of the night. By her advice they were beaten without mercy. They were then counselled to commit suicide either with knife, halter, or poison. They desired the Giant to let them go. Hearing this he would have killed them on the spot, but, being seized with a fit to which he was liable, he lost the use of his hands. Thus turned from his purpose he left Christian and Hopeful, and nothing can be more instructive than the counsel which they took of each other concerning what they must do. Christian in the depth of his misery was disposed to end his days at once, quoting the language of Job, "My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life," and adding "and the grave is more easy for me than this dungeon. Shall we be ruled by the Giant?" Hopeful, lighter of heart than his companion, bade him remember that the Lord of the country to which they were going had said, "Thou shalt do no murder," much more then would he prohibit suicide. Moreover, he reminded him that others had been in the dungeon and escaped, and that God who made the world might cause that Giant Despair should die, or at some time or other forget to lock them in, or have another of his fits before them and lose the use of his limbs. "But however, my brother," added Hopeful, "let us be patient and endure for a while; the time may come that may give us a happy release: but let us not be our own murderers." With these words Hopeful at present did moderate the mind of his brother; so

they continued together in the dark, that day in their doleful condition."

In the evening the Giant came down to the dungeon again, and, seeing the prisoners had disobeyed his counsel, he told them it should be worse with them than if they had never been born. Then Christian was entirely unmanned, and Hopeful again encouraged him, this time by reminding him of his deliverances in the past.

In the morning the Pilgrims were taken into the castle yard to see the bones and skulls of those like themselves who had perished, the Giant saying to them "and so within ten days I will do you: so get you down to your den again. And with that he beat them all the way thither." That night the Giant's wife suggested that they were living in the hope that some one would deliver them, or that they had picklocks about them by means of which they were hoping to escape. It was resolved to search them on the morrow.

Briefly but very significantly the Dreamer writes, "Well, on Saturday about midnight they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day." Christian a little before it was day suddenly remembered that he had the means of release in his own hands. In his bosom he found the Key of Promise, which can open any lock in Doubting Castle. "Then, said Hopeful, that's good news, good brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try." Every bolt flew back. The lock at the outer gate was desperately hard, but it yielded. The opening of the gate awoke the Giant, but, being

suddenly seized with a fit, he could not go after them, so "they went on and came to the King's Highway again, and so were safe, because they were out of his jurisdiction."

How immensely instructive is all this. Here we have a picture of two backsliding Christians. They have left the King's Highway for By-path Meadow, and obstinate, prayerless, and cold, they have become the prisoners of unbelief and been brought to the very borders of despair. In the Giant's constant application for counsel to his wife, Mrs. Diffidence or Distrust, we have the fact of Despair being governed entirely in all it thinks and purposes by unbelief. It is this that gives Despair all its horror and all its power. Did the Giant show the Pilgrims the skulls of those whom he had slain? So Despair fills the mind with dreadful thoughts about apostates who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost and perished in their guilt. Did Diffidence urge the Giant to see if the prisoners had not the means of escape about them? So Despair would deprive the poor dark soul of all prayer, all effort at release, and shut out from it the least hope of escape. Fearful is this condition. Saul and Judas were torn to pieces by Giant Despair. Both took his advice and made "an end of themselves." David, Peter, and Thomas escaped only by the Key of Promise. And how powerful is prayer. Like Paul and Silas, Christian and Hopeful spent a night upon their knees. Light came the moment they *began to pray*. This was the backslider returning in good earnest. And with it came the remembrance

of “exceeding precious promises,” the covenant mercies which God holds for His people. The Sabbath dawn brought songs of deliverance. And where had the means of escape been all the while? In Christian’s bosom!—in his own possession! What a lesson for you, trembling believer. You are your own tormentor. Why remain in Doubting Castle, in the clutches of Giant Despair another moment? Grasp the Key of Promise, drive back the bolt of that ponderous dungeon door of guilt which has so long mocked you in your anguish, and come forth to the blessed sunlight of that liberty with which Christ makes His people free—“let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Let us make the Psalmist’s prayer our own, “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.”

Better tread the rough and rugged path of the King’s Highway than the soft and pleasant sward of By-path Meadow. “Through much tribulation” we must enter the kingdom of God. Doubt, and difficulty, and dread may come; but the Key of Promise can free us from them all. If you have this never mind what else you have not. You may cry “Heaven is my home!”

“O love of God, how strong and true!
Eternal and yet ever new,
Uncomprehended and unbought,
Beyond all knowledge and all thought.
O love of God, how deep and great!
Far deeper than man’s deepest hate;
Self-fed, self-kindled like the light,
Changeless, eternal, infinite.

O heavenly love, how precious still,
In days of weariness and ill !
In nights of pain and helplessness,
To heal, to comfort, and to bless.

We read thee best in Him who came,
To bear for us the cross of shame,
Sent by the Father from on high,
Our life to live, our death to die.

O love of God, our shield and stay,
Through all the perils of the way ;
Eternal love, in thee we rest,
For ever safe, for ever blessed ! ”



TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS.

“ And He carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”
—REV. xxi. 10.

THIS glorious vision presented to the Apostle John will be sufficient to introduce us to the next stage of the heavenly journey which our Pilgrims reached. We left them pursuing their way after they had escaped from Giant Despair. Having recrossed the fatal stile which had led them to Doubting Castle, they put up a warning to other travellers, and, once more upon the highroad, they continued their journey.

After the days of horror and nights of weariness which had been spent in Doubting Castle, how acceptable would be the pleasant scene which soon burst upon their eyes. Thus, ever and anon, “times of refreshing” are granted to us. There are brief

but pleasant seasons when the clouds of doubt break and the bright sun of spiritual enjoyment falls upon the heart. These are the pleasant spots on the road, often coming immediately after times of darkness and distress. One has truly said—"There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing awhile on the roof and then fly away." At these times of which we speak the birds find entrance, and sing as it were in the chambers of our hearts, and lift us up so high that we seem altogether to have lost our hold upon the world. Let us then deal with—

1. THE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR PLEASANT COMPANY.

2. THE GREAT LESSONS WHICH OUR PILGRIMS LEARNED THERE.

1. THE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR PLEASANT COMPANY.—"They went then until they came to *the Delectable Mountains*, which mountains belong to the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken; so they went up to the mountains, to behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water; where also they drank and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards. Now there were on the top of these mountains shepherds feeding their flocks, and they stood by the highway side."

This is a sweet picture. The idea of a mountain embodies everything that is grand, beautiful, and exhilarating. We think of an atmosphere pure and

bracing—a calm broken only by the notes of birds—of a prospect extending over fruitful valleys, blooming gardens, and winding streams. How great a change was this for our Pilgrims from Doubting Castle and Giant Despair. With what joy would they enter this lovely spot, eat of the fruits of its vineyards, and bathe in its crystal waters. And after the horrors of the scenes through which they had lately passed how peaceful would the entire scene appear, with the shepherds feeding their flocks, and standing by the wayside to welcome weary travellers to “Immanuel’s land,” the home of peace, of love, and beauty. Such are the bright spots which Christian pilgrims are permitted to see as they near their heavenly rest.

“The Delectable Mountains” are those lofty terraces of spiritual enjoyment on which they walk, and from which they catch the glimmer of that golden light which robes the distant City of God. These mountains picture forth those calm and happy moments when the ripening soul has no cloud between it and God, when, like a saint of old time, free from the least shadow of unbelief, it can say, “Come, oh come, let us gather some flowers of comfort this hour,” and feel how substantial, real, and true is that trust in Christ which can bring such sunshine to the heart. Happy are those who reach the Delectable Mountains. Only genuine pilgrims ever tread these blessed summits. Oh, how we drink in from these lofty heights strength and refreshment for the soul. How we go “from faith to faith,” and advance in knowledge and experience, longing to

“depart and be with Christ”—the feet being conspicuously on “Immanuel’s land,” and the eye resting on “that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven.”

“Then all is peace and light,
This soul within ;
Thus shall I walk with Thee,
The lov’d unseen ;
Leaning on Thee, my God.
Guided along the road,
Nothing between.”

Then we read that the pilgrims, leaning on their staves, being wearied with their journey, accosted the shepherds, asking, “Whose Delectable Mountains are these, and whose be the sheep that feed upon them ?” The shepherds replied, “These mountains are Immanuel’s land, and they are within sight of the City ; and the sheep also are His, and He laid down His life for them.” Further, in reply to questions, the shepherds informed them that it was the way to the Celestial City, that the distance was too far except for those who shall get thither indeed, that the way was safe for those for whom it is safe, that the Lord of the Mountains had given them a charge “not to be forgetful of strangers,” and that therefore the good of the place was before them. The shepherds then put several inquiries to the travellers, and, having “heard their answers, and being pleased therewith, they looked very lovingly upon them, and said, Welcome to the Delectable Mountains.”

How very beautiful and instructive is all this. It is a perfect reflection of Holy Scripture. Who

can doubt such a pleasant spot and happy season of the Christian's journey is "Immanuel's land?" These are the blessed pastures of that Church which "He has purchased with His own blood," where His sheep are fed by the hand of His under-shepherds, "His ministers who do His pleasure," and where they anticipate the hour when "other sheep" shall join them, and in the City, the gates of which they can see, there shall be "one flock and one Shepherd" for all eternity.

The City is "too far for any but those who shall get thither indeed." "As many as are ordained to eternal life" through divine grace shall endure even to the end. And it is "safe for those for whom it is safe;" for Jesus shall never lose a single sheep after which He has gone, and which He has carried in His bosom—"They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." And in what a beautiful aspect is the Christian ministry presented to us here. These shepherds into whose hand the Lord of these Mountains had committed the charge "not to be forgetful to entertain strangers," bore the expressive names of *Knowledge*, *Experience*, *Watchful* and *Sincere*. Could any terms more appropriately set forth the qualifications of a true ministry, the marks of those who should be the pastors of that flock which feeds upon Immanuel's land? They must have *knowledge*—acquaintance with divine truth, requisite information as the instructors of others. They must have *experience*—know the truth of what they affirm by their influence upon their own hearts and lives. They must have

watchfulness—knowledge may be unused, experience may be inoperative for good, but ministers must be wakeful watchers on the tower, protectors of the flock, ready to lay down their lives for the sheep. And they must be *sincere*—without sincerity, “known and read of all men,” otherwise there will be no real—no effective ministry. A deep sense of responsibility lies at its base, and a love for Christ and perishing souls is its inspiration. Such are the qualifications of a true ministry. Such has ever been the glory of the Church, and a blessing to the world.

Thus then, my reader, these Delectable Mountains represent to us the state of a believer who, under the blessing of a faithful ministry, and the deepening work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, realizes the assurance of the established child of God. Not all can stand on these bracing heights of spiritual experience. It is not the privilege of the babe in Christ. But let every true Christian pilgrim be assured that there is no reason he should not reach this pleasant place. Every step we take forward in the Christian life we rise higher—into a brighter region and a purer air. And how sweet is the thought which crosses our mind at the words of the shepherd, “And the sheep are also His, and He laid down His life for them.”

All for whom Christ died and who are living by faith in Him are His sheep. There are many pens or folds, but there is only one flock and one Shepherd. And does it not remind us of the approaching day when that flock shall be complete, when all denominational distinctions shall be merged in the one great

name of *Christian*, and all those to whom Christ has given eternal life, gathered by His grace and sustained by His love, shall form one happy group in "the great city, the heavenly Jerusalem," to go no more out for ever?

And should not God's people aspire to these Delectable Mountains? To tread them and enjoy them is not essential to living Christianity. It is quite possible to be a Christian and yet not see this sunny spot. But these are the higher walks of experience, the hills of light to which God's grace and goodness call us, and why should we miss them in the heavenly journey? And, alas, how true was that which the shepherds said, "But few of them that begin to come hither do show their faces on these mountains." Thousands appear to start for the Celestial City. They commence their journey, so to speak, at the wrong end, and break down by the way. Misled by a few vain fancies, and wanting the root of the matter, they are soon turned aside. They are never seen on the Delectable Mountains. And even true pilgrims, as we have said, may miss them. But there is no reason why they should. Let every believer get out of the shadowy valley of Hope, and never rest until he gains the sunny mountain of Assurance. The first is to *taste* Religion—the second is to *enjoy* it. The first calms us as we toil along the rough and thorny road—the second bids us spread our wings, and soar above it, like birds bound for brighter and more congenial climes. Let Rome pronounce assurance "a prime error of heretics;" but such men as St. Paul

and John Bunyan could tell of the Delectable Mountains.

Let us now see in the second place :—

2. THE GREAT LESSONS THE PILGRIMS LEARNED ON THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS.—“Then I saw in my dream that in the morning the shepherds called upon Christian and Hopeful to walk with them upon the mountains : so they went forth with them, and walked a while, having a pleasant prospect on every side. Then said the shepherds one to another, Shall we show these pilgrims some wonders ?” The first wonder which was shown to them was “*the Hill called Error.*” It was very steep on the farthest side, and as Christian and Hopeful looked down they saw at the bottom several men dashed to pieces by a fall that they had had from the top. In explanation of this the shepherds reminded them of Hymenæus and Philetus, mentioned by St. Paul, who erred concerning the Resurrection and “overthrew the faith of some.”—2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. They moreover told the pilgrims that the bodies had been left unburied as a warning to others not to come too near to the brink of the mountain.

This is very instructive, and never more so than in this age, in which the followers of Hymenæus and Philetus can be counted by thousands. How many have left the path of Holy Scripture to their ruin. Wandering from the one standard of divine truth, they have reached the brink of error, and finally made shipwreck of the soul. Unwilling to submit to Revelation, and indulging in vain imaginations, they

have lost their foothold and perished in their sins. There is nothing more dangerous than the vain speculative spirit which brings every statement of the Oracles of God to the bar of human reason. There is nothing contrary to reason in the revelations of grace and providence, but there may be very much above and beyond it. Hence it is, the wise men after the flesh stumble and fall, while the unlettered, taking the lamp of God's Word, find their way out of darkness. The fact is, there is no safety outside the boards of the Bible. The moment we get on other ground we are in uncertainty and doubt. Here alone is truth—infallible truth—and those only who are rooted here can feel the power of the invisible, can rise above the things which are temporal to those that are eternal. Such alone can escape "*the hill Error*." The temper which tramples upon doubt is that which in godliness of mind mounts to every height of Truth beyond it, with the words "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." Thus sweetly has Cowper embalmed these facts in his well-known sketch of Voltaire, the self-sufficient philosopher, and the humble lace-worker :—

"Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store ;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
She for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit ;
Receives no praise ; but though her lot be such
(Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;

And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O, happy peasant ! O, unhappy bard !
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;
He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home ;
He lost *in errors* his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers."

The next wonder to which they were taken was *Mount Caution*. Looking afar off they saw as they thought several persons walking up and down among the tombs, and they perceived that they were blind and could not get out from among them. In explanation of this the shepherds told them that from the stile which they could see below there was a path leading directly to Doubting Castle, kept by Giant Despair, and that the men they saw had set out on their pilgrimage just as they had done. But the right way was rough, so they had chosen the meadow and fallen into the hands of the Giant, who had put out their eyes and left them wandering to this very day.

The Dreamer adds, "Then Christian and Hopeful looked upon one another with tears gushing out, but yet said nothing to the shepherds." This was a bow drawn at a venture, but the arrow hit the joints of Ahab's harness. "Thou art the man," sank down into their hearts. They had told nothing of their experience of By-path Meadow, Doubting Castle, and Giant Despair, but in the scene presented to them they saw a picture of themselves.

Believer, we need *Caution*. The enemy of souls is busy. If he can he will tempt us from the road

into By-path Meadow. We need very often pray the prayer of the Psalmist. "Thou art my rock and my fortress ; therefore for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me."

The third wonder to which they were taken was *a door in the side of the hill*. Bidden to look in, they saw that it was very dark and smoking, and they thought they heard a rumbling noise as of fire, and a cry of some tormented, and that they smelt the smell of brimstone. In explanation of this the shepherds told them that it was a by-way to hell, a way that hypocrites go in at, such as Esau who sell their birthright, Judas who sell their Master, Alexander who blaspheme the Gospel, and Ananias and Sapphira who lie and dissemble.

How deeply solemn was this lesson. Many who had made a show of pilgrimage had gone to destruction through this road. How terrible is the fact, and who shall say what men may suffer and what profess who come short after all and pass through this door to the hypocrite's doom ? Such pictures as these ought to lead to great searching of heart. We may well pray with holy David, " Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Only those who have truly repented of sin exercise real faith in Christ, and are endeavouring to lead a holy life, will ever reach the Celestial City. Well might the pilgrims say, " We have need to cry to the Strong for strength."

The last wonder which they saw was that which

had been promised to Christian at the Palace Beautiful. The fair sisters had shown him the Delectable Mountains, and had said to him, "And when thou comest there, from thence thou mayst see to the gates of the Celestial City, as the shepherds that live there will make it appear." Christian and Hopeful were taken to the top of a *high hill called Clear*, and through a glass tried to look in the direction of the distant gate, but their hands shook so by reason of the last thing they had seen that they only "thought they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place."

Ah, nothing but the hand of strong faith can hold that glass firmly. The faintest shadow of unbelief will darken its lens and becloud the glorious prospect. "We see through a glass darkly." There are many things which prevent us getting a *clear* view of the Celestial City. We rarely reach beyond "*something like* the gate and *some* of the glory of the place." But let us aim at nothing less. It may be when the shadows are gathering about us, ere the flame of life goes down in its socket, that we shall say with holy Payson, "The Celestial City is full in view—its glories beam upon me—its breezes fan me—its odours are wafted to me—its music strikes upon my ear—and its spirit breathes into my heart ; nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears as a narrow rill which may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission." God grant that it may be so. But, meanwhile, let us try to live on the Delectable Mountains, and cherish the thought that beyond the darkest cloud

that bounds the horizon there is the golden sunshine
which shall last for ever and ever.

“Gone the vanity and folly,
Gone the dark and melancholy,
Come the joyous and the holy ;
Ah ! 'tis heaven at last !

Not a broken blossom yonder,
Not a link can snap asunder,
Stayed the tempest, sheathed the thunder ;
Ah ! 'tis heaven at last !

Christ himself the living splendour,
Christ the sunlight mild and tender ;
Praises to the Lamb we render :
Ah ! 'tis heaven at last !

Broken death's dread bands that bound us,
Life and victory around us ;
Christ the King himself hath crowned us :
Ah ! 'tis heaven at last !”



TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

IGNORANCE, TURN-AWAY, AND LITTLE-FAITH.

“ *Strong in faith.*”—ROM. iv. 20.

THIS was written by St. Paul concerning the patriarch Abraham. He believed God, not only in the face of improbabilities, but impossibilities, “being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.” Therefore the Apostle describes him as “*Strong in faith.*” These three words may very suitably stand at the head of this chapter. And let me say that to have right views of *faith* lies at the foundation of all true spiritual knowledge. To possess faith—saving faith—however weak, small, and imperfect it may be, is essential to salvation. These facts will be brought out in the course of our review of three characters which Bunyan presents to us at the stage of the journey which we have to-day to consider.

Having fallen asleep again, the Dreamer had his Dream continued. He "saw the same two Pilgrims going down the mountains along the highway towards the city." Christian and Hopeful, no doubt deeply impressed by the lessons which they had learned, and greatly cheered by the glimpse of the gate of the Celestial City which they had enjoyed from the Hill Clear, pursued their journey. Thus, my reader, we make our way to the glorious home to which Jesus and the bright angels long to welcome us. But even though we have caught sight of the far-off gates of bliss as our faith has become stronger and our experience more mature, we have many a sad sight to witness, and many a trying lesson to learn, ere we reach "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." It was so with Christian and Hopeful, and will be so with every true pilgrim "going down the mountains along the highway towards the city."

"Going down the mountains." Who is there would not like always to be on Hill Clear, enjoying those blessed moments when in holy meditation upon God's goodness and Christ's love, we can look through the Telescope of Faith to the very gates of our celestial home? Like Peter we would shut out the busy, careless, sin-ruined world at our feet and say, "It is good for us to be here." But Christ knows better. We are not the best judges of what is good for us. Well has a noble writer told us, "It is good for a man to have holy and quiet thoughts, and at moments to see into the very deepest meaning of God's word and God's earth, and to have, as it were, heaven opened before his eyes; and it is good for a

man sometimes actually to *feel* his heart overpowered with the glorious majesty of God, and to feel it gushing out with love to his blessed Saviour; but it is not good to stop there, any more than it was for the Apostles; they had to leave the glorious vision and come down from the Mount and do Christ's work; and *so have we.*" It was thus with Christian and Hopeful. They have to come down from the mountains and once more take to the highway.

We have now three persons presented to us. All are worthy of consideration, and suggest matter for profitable consideration. They are *Ignorance*, *Turn-away*, and *Little-faith*. Let us look at them separately.

1. *Ignorance.* "Now a little below these mountains on the left hand, lieth the country of Conceit, from which country there comes into the way in which the Pilgrims walked a little crooked lane. Here therefore they met with a very brisk lad that came out of that country, and his name was Ignorance." Let us observe—this man came from the country of *Conceit*, and that he reached the highway which Christian and Hopeful trod, not by "the strait gate," but by "*a little crooked lane.*" Let us observe, too, he was "*a very brisk lad,*" full of self-confidence and assurance, and that his name was *Ignorance*, appearing to know a great deal and really knowing very little. All this is extremely instructive. The character of *Ignorance* is a very common one. Let us hear a little of his experience. According to his own account he was going to the Celestial City. He found no difficulty at the gate, for, said he, "I

know the Lord's will, and have been a good liver ; I I pay every man his own ; I pray, fast, pay tithes, and give alms, and have left my country for whither I am going."

Christian charged him with having come by *the crooked lane* instead of by *the Wicket-gate* at the head of the way, and expressed the fear that at the reckoning day he would be regarded as a thief and a robber, and be denied admittance into the city.

Let us carefully note the answer of *Ignorance*. "Gentlemen, ye be utter strangers to me, I know you not ; be content to follow the religion of your country, and I will follow the religion of mine. I hope all will be well. And as for the gate that you talk of, all the world knows that *that* is a great way off our country. I cannot think that any man in all our parts doth so much as know the way to it ; nor need they matter whether they do so or no ; since we have, as you see, a fine, pleasant, green lane that comes down from our country, the next way into the way ?"

Christian soon saw through the man and said to Hopeful whisperingly, " There is more hope of a fool than of him." The Pilgrims therefore left Ignorance to think of what he had heard, hoping at a future time to do him some good.

There are none who have tried to be useful to the souls of men who will not have met such persons as those who are set forth in the character of *Ignorance*. True pilgrims are indeed utter strangers to them. Born in the country of *Conceit* they take their own way, and will tell you that they leave you

to follow yours. They are very "*brisk*," sharp, shrewd, and forward, for Ignorance and Impertinence generally go together. They refuse to take the road which Christians declare to be the only right one, and "hope all will be well." No one who ever lived in *Conceit* ever knew the way to the Wicket-gate, always having taken "the pleasant green lane" that comes down from their country. This is true alike to Scripture and to real life. There are tens of thousands described in this character. Solomon could say nearly 3,000 years ago, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness."—Prov. xx. 6. Every age has supplied examples of those who are wise in their own conceits. And how difficult is it to deal with such. Truly, "There is more hope of a fool than of" *Ignorance*.

What can you do with a man who prides himself with knowing his Lord's will, and being "a good liver," because he has discharged his debts, prayed, fasted, paid tithes, and given alms? Such a man may very *briskly* approach God without any casting down of the eyes or smiting on the breast, and say with the Pharisee of old "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." So long as such are determined to come along "the fine, pleasant, green lane" that leads from the country of *Conceit*, and refuse to go round to *the Wicket-gate*—"CHRIST, "THE WAY"—you can do nothing with them. They are quite satisfied with an external morality, with a decent regard for the forms of religion, and as to the other road, it is *a great way off*, and by no means so easy as "the way that seemeth right" *unto them*.

And we must not fail to notice that Ignorance was no sceptic, but a professor of religion. He thought to get in at the gate "*as other good people do.*" He claimed to know his Lord's will, declared that he discharged his religious as well as his social duties, avowed the fact that he had left his own country for the Celestial City, and expressed the hope that all would be well. Then where were his folly and his sin? They were here. He wanted to be saved, like the Pharisee, by his own doings. He flattered himself that he had come out of *Conceit* because he felt a desire to reach the Celestial City. He really knew nothing of his own heart, nothing about the one only true way, nothing of the need of anything to show at the gate. Such was *Ignorance*.

There are hundreds of thousands like him. Multitudes of professors of religion are in utter ignorance of their own sinful nature, of the absolute necessity of Christ's righteousness, and are endeavouring to get to heaven by their own works. It may be they "make long prayers," it may be they endure long fasts, it may be they build churches and support charities, but on all this they rest for acceptance with God. They rely on their own merit instead of Christ's; their plea is their own doing rather than Christ's atonement; they have no thought of God's quickening and sustaining grace, and live on neither seeing the glory of the Cross nor feeling its offence, but hoping all will be well.

Such religion is entirely in vain. It is a foundation altogether rotten, destined to crumble away "when the reckoning day shall come." If ever we

are to reach the Celestial City we must abandon the country of Conceit in good earnest. We must be willing as miserable, lost, undone wanderers, to go to Christ, the Wicket-gate, with the one cry "Here is a poor burdened sinner ; I come from the City of Destruction, but I am going to Mount Zion, that I may be delivered from the wrath to come." There is no way but this. Thus alone can we find pardon, hope, peace, joy, heaven.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling."

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me.
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come !"

2. *Turn-away.* We cannot do better than give the words of the Dreamer. "Now when they had passed him a little way, they entered into a very dark lane, where they met a man whom seven devils had bound with seven strong cords, and were carrying back to the door that they saw on the side of the hill. Now good Christian began to tremble, and so did Hopeful for his companion ; yet, as the devils led away the man, Christian looked to see if he knew him ; and he thought it might be one Turn-away that dwelt in the town of Apostacy. But he did not perfectly see his face, for he did hang his head like a thief that is found. But being gone past Hopeful looked after him, and espied on his back a paper with the inscription, "Wanton professor, and damnable apostate." There is much instruction in this. There

are dark places on the way to heaven, and the Christian must go into them. There are sad and melancholy sights to be witnessed, and the Christian must see them. And what can be darker and what more sad than the case of *Turn-away* who has dwelt in the town of Apostacy.

We have no warrant for the stability of religious profession but the saving grace of God. If this be wanting, Satan, who has departed for a brief season, will return with a reinforcement of his emissaries, and he who has aroused the ridicule of the world and the hope of the church will afford a sad commentary on the words of Christ—"the last state of that man is worse than the first." Oh, let us beware of Apostacy. Let such cases as those of Saul, Amaziah, and Judas, put us on our guard. There is no safety but in a change of heart, and in the constant renewal of the Holy Spirit. Let it be our part to be diligent in the use of means. Above all, let us live in the daily habit of private prayer, remembering that "Apostacy begins at the closet door." There are thousands, who, like *Turn-away*, begin well, but reformation is not conversion, and they are borne away "to the door on the side of the hill." Such sights are the saddest on which the Christian has to look. Such very often occasion him great bitterness of soul. But these things should lead to deep searching of heart, and much prayerfulness of spirit. If we are redeemed and saved it is only through the blood of Christ ; if we stand firm and true it is only through the grace of God.

“ I can do nothing without thee,
My strength is wholly thine ;
Withered and barren should I be
If severed from the vine.”

3. *Little-faith*. The conversation about *Little-faith* is extremely interesting. The locality brought the case to Christian's remembrance. It appeared that *Little-faith*, a pilgrim, arriving at *Deadman's Lane*, sat down and slept. Sleeping when he ought to have been watching, and resting when he ought to have been travelling, he brought himself into trouble; for three sturdy rogues whose names were *Faint-heart*, *Mistrust*, and *Guilt*, three brothers, came up to him just when he was waking, and both robbed him and ill-treated him. *Faint-heart* demanded his money, *Mistrust* pulled out of his pocket a bag of silver, and, when he cried “ Thieves,” *Guilt* struck him to the ground with a great club. At last, hearing some one on the road, and fearing it might be *Great-grace* who dwelt in the town of *Good-confidence*, they left him and fled. This was the story, and a long and interesting conversation between Christian and Hopeful followed. It seemed *Little-faith's* “ spending money ” was all gone, that his jewels were quite safe, and that, though he had a little odd money left, he had scarcely enough to bring him to the end of his journey. Indeed he had to beg his way as he went to keep him alive, for his jewels he might not sell. The wonder was that he preserved his *Certificate* by which he was to receive admission at the Celestial Gate.

“ It was,” said Christian, “ more by good pro-

vidence than by his endeavour that they missed of that good thing." Hopeful thought that the preservation of his jewels would be a great comfort to him, but Christian told him that though it ought to have been so it was not, for he was so overwhelmed by the loss of his money, that he went forward scattering all the rest of the way with nothing but doleful and bitter complaints. Hopeful expressed surprise that his distress did not drive him to sell or pawn his jewels. For this thought Christian sharply reproved his fellow-pilgrim, telling him that Little-faith's jewels in that country were accounted nothing, and that he did not want relief from such a quarter. Besides, had the jewels been missing at the Celestial Gate he would have been excluded, and that would have been worse than ten thousand thieves. Hopeful instanced the case of Esau, but Christian pointed out that there was a difference between Esau and *Little-faith*. Esau was the mere slave of fleshly appetite, but it was not so with *Little-faith*. We nowhere read that Esau had any faith, but *Little-faith*, though he had but *little* faith, what faith he had was real and true. The two men were thoroughly unlike. "Though faithless ones," said Christian, "can for carnal lusts, pawn or mortgage or sell what they have, and themselves outright to boot, yet they that have faith, saving faith, though but a *little* of it, cannot do so. Here, therefore, my brother, is thy mistake."

The conversation which followed turned upon the difficulty of the warfare, and the folly of relying upon our own strength, and from it we see how pilgrims differ in their experience, for Christian could

tell of conflicts and trials which Hopeful had entirely escaped.

Hopeful alluding to *Great-grace*, Christian said, “ True, they often fled, both they and their master, when *Great-grace* hath but appeared : and no marvel, for he is the King’s champion ; but I trow you will put some difference between *Little-faith* and the King’s champion. All the King’s subjects are not his champions ; nor can they when tried do such feats of war as he. Is it meet to think that a little child should handle Goliath as David did ? or that there should be the strength of an ox in a wren ? Some are strong, some are weak ; some have great faith, some have little ; this man was one of the weak, and therefore he ‘ went to the wall.’ ”

Christian further assured Hopeful that even *Great-grace* had received many scars and cuts, and had been sorely put to it by *Faint-heart*, *Mistrust*, and *Guilt*, so much so as on one occasion to say, “ We despair even of life.” He also reminded him how these sturdy rogues and their fellows had made David groan, mourn, and roar ; how Heman and Hezekiah had their coats soundly brushed by them ; and how Peter, though some say of him that he is prince of the apostles, was so handled by them that they made him at last afraid of a sorry girl.

In concluding the conversation, Christian pointed out two things which became them to do in the presence of such robberies on the King’s highway—first to go out harnessed, and then to desire of the King a convoy, even that he would go with them himself. It was this which had comforted [David

and Moses, and Christian acknowledged he had no cause to boast of his manhood though he had been in the fray, but he added, "Glad shall I be if I meet with no more such brunts: though I fear we are not got beyond all danger. However, since the lion and the bear have not as yet devoured me, I hope God will also deliver us from the next uncircumcised Philistine."

What more I have to say must be condensed into as small a space as possible. There are degrees of faith among Christians. All men are not the King's champions. There are men like Luther who know no fear. There are others like Cranmer who fall asleep in the dark lane. *Little-faith* believers are sorely treated by *Faint-heart*, *Mistrust*, and *Guilt*. The first strips them of their boldness, the second robs them of the promises, the third strikes them down with a sense of sin. Thus are they at the mercy of their foes. They lose all their "*spending money*"—that is, all their present peace and joy. They cannot lose their jewels, because these, their treasures, are in heaven. Their certificate is safe, because the witness of God's Spirit to their acceptance and future triumph is secured to them in Christ. But *little faith*, as much as strong faith, is the gift of God, and it is in safe keeping.

And, beloved, it is a precious possession. Let us not be discouraged because our faith is so weak and our brother's so strong. We lose our joy but not our sense of pardon. We lose our grasp of the promises but not our hope of heaven.

Let us pray to become *Great-grace*, the King's champion, who lives in the town of *Good-confidence*,

that we may keep back *Faint-heart*, *Mistrust*, and *Guilt*, at the sword's point, and triumph upon every field. Above all let us pray to be well harnessed, having "the shield of faith wherewith we shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked," and for the company of that Saviour by whom alone we can be "more than conquerors." Thus only can we go on our way *rejoicing*. Weak faith can put a light, feeble though it be, in our hearts, but strong faith can put a song into our mouths. Weak faith will take us home like travellers weary and footsore, but strong faith will carry us like a ship in full sail into the Celestial harbour. God grant us this faith, for Christ's sake.

"Faith is the Spirit's sweet control
From which assurance brings ;
Faith is the pencil of the soul
That pictures heavenly things.

Faith is the conq'ring host that storms
The battlements of sin,
Faith is the quick'ning fire that warms
The trembling soul within.

Faith is the eye that soon can test
The world and all its worth,
Faith is the heart that cannot rest
On aught that clings to earth.

Faith gives the wings that heavenward bear
Our cold, imperfect praise ;
Faith is the soul of every prayer
The weakest saint can raise.

Faith is the lamp that burns to guide
Our bark when tempest driven,
Faith is the hand that opens wide
The distant gates of heaven.

O Rock of Ages, Fount of bliss,
Thy needful help afford,
And let our constant prayer be *this*—
'Increase my faith, O Lord.' " J.B.





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TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

HEAVY TRIAL AND LOVING INTERCOURSE.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.”—MALACHI iii. 16.

WE are told that when David was a fugitive in the wilderness of Ziph, hiding himself from the malignant hatred of Saul, that Jonathan, his loving friend, went to him, and “strengthened his hand in God.” We are also told that when Daniel asked time of Nebuchadnezzar for the interpretation of his dream that he went to his house and made the thing known to his companions, “that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret.” Coming to Gospel times we read how the disciples assembled in an upper room, and “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.” We remember

too the Christian intercourse which St. Paul held with the elders of Ephesus, impressing upon them their duty, and recalling "the words of the Lord Jesus," and how, "when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all."

This is what we call the Communion of Saints, that in which we avow our belief when we repeat the Apostles' Creed, the sweet interchange of holy thoughts which is the precious privilege of all who, trusting in a common Saviour, are looking forward to the enjoyment of a common heaven. Many times is this set forth to us in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Men with hearts like that which John Bunyan possessed rise far above the atmosphere of denominational Christianity. Such men hold very loosely to *the circumstantial*, and find their rallying point entirely in *the essential*. The language of earth is to call our brother a Churchman, or a Presbyterian, or a Methodist; the language of heaven is to speak of him only as a Christian. A moderate love of our Church is a good sign of spiritual life, but, to quote the words of Richard Cecil, "a violent sectarian spirit is a sign of religious declension." God grant us wisdom enough to discern things that differ, and love enough to rise above all party distinctions and say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Ephes. vi. 24. These remarks are suggested by a most edifying conversation which Christian and Hopeful enjoyed.

Before we take up this another matter must first engage our attention. These two subjects are before us :—

1. HEAVY TRIAL.
2. LOVING INTERCOURSE.

1. HEAVY TRIAL.—Our Pilgrims are truly on the way to the Celestial City, but they are often reminded they are not yet at their journey's end. To understand the trial which now beset them we must recall the parting exhortation of the Shepherds of *the Delectable Mountains*. “When they were about to depart one of the shepherds gave them a *note of the way*; another bid them *beware of the flatterer*; the third bid them *take heed that they sleep not upon the enchanted ground*; and the fourth bid them God speed.”

Bunyan brings two more characters before us—the *Flatterer* and *Atheist*. To these we must give a brief consideration. It seems that our Pilgrims, Christian and Hopeful, went forward “till they came to a place where they saw a way put itself in their way, and seemed withal to lie as straight as the way which they should go.” What were they to do? “They stood still to consider.” We know what they ought to have done—they should have consulted *the note of the way* which the shepherds had given them. This they did not do, but, again leaning “to their own understandings,” they brought themselves once more into trouble. During their consultation *Flatterer* appears. He is described as “a man of black flesh, but covered with a very light robe.” He asked them why they stood there? They told him they were going to the Celestial City, but knew not which way to take. He bade them follow him as he

was going to the same place. The misfortune which happened to the Pilgrims is thus related: "So they followed him in the way that but now came into the road, which by degrees turned, and turned them so far from the city that they desired to go to, that in a little time their faces were turned away from it; yet they followed him. But by-and-by, before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the black man's back; then they saw where they were. Wherefore there they lay crying some time, for they could not get themselves out."

Now, you perceive, this man pretended to be what he was not. He was an avowed friend but a secret enemy. He looked white but he was really black—like those old enemies of our Lord, whom He described as "whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." This was *Flatterer*, the vile hypocrite and dissembler, with Jacob's voice but Esau's hands, the arch fiend himself "transformed into an angel of light."

And, rest assured, my reader, this is Satan's most popular character—his most successful personation. Bunyan's idea of Satan is far more true to the reality than that of poets. Milton has simply sketched him as the desperate foe of the Almighty:

"And from his seat
The monster, moving onward, came as fast
With horrid strides, hell trembled as he strode."

Goethe and Byron have drawn him as a dark and

dreadful visitor among the children of men. A third poet has represented him as a supremely intellectual being, one who admires the beautiful and good, and yet hates them, and who, not as a repulsive fiend, but rather as an angel of light, seduces men to destruction. The last is the truer picture. We see in it *Flatterer*, the deceiver who wore the mask of the hypocrite, the white robe of pretended righteousness, and never revealed his character until he had drawn our Pilgrims into his net, and tried to plunge them into despair.

Then Christian and Hopeful reproached themselves. They recalled the warnings of the Shepherds, and remembered at last "*the note of the way*" which they had given to them. As they were bewailing themselves in the net a Shining One came to them with a whip of small cords in His hand. Having questioned them and heard their story He told them that *Flatterer* had deceived them, and, having rent their net, He led them back to the way they had left. After a few more questions which served to bring before them the sinful neglect of their conduct, He commanded them to lie down, and chastised them, saying, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent." With that He bade them go on their way, and remember the directions of the Shepherds.

We have in all this a picture most wonderfully true to Scripture of Christians beguiled by Satan to "lean unto their own understandings" instead of consulting and obeying "*the note by the way*"—the word of God—the only safe lamp and light which

can bring them to heaven. They are caught in the net of the Deceiver, but their Heavenly Father who follows them with a love which cannot fail, breaks their net and sends them forth singing:—"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped." But punishment must follow. There is the "*whip of small cords*," though it is in a Father's hand. The scourges are not penal but entirely parental, for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." And, my dear reader, shall we murmur when this "*whip of small cords*" descends upon us? Surely not. Is there not a needs-be? Have we not brought it upon ourselves? Is it not for our good, and shall we not be the better for it afterwards? Who is there who will not say:—

"I did Thee wrong, my God,
I wronged Thy truth and love,
I fretted at Thy rod,
Against Thy power I strove.

I said, my God, at length,
This stony heart remove,
Deny all other strength,
But give me strength to love.

Come nearer, nearer still,
Let not Thy light depart;
Bend, break this stubborn will,
Dissolve this iron heart."

Happy are those who, like Eli, can yield their backs to "*the whip of small cords*" and say, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

But to Christian and Hopeful again. They were soon met by another tempter. *Atheist* came up to

them, and asked them whither they were going. When Christian answered "We are going to Mount Zion," Athiest "fell into a very great laughter." When called upon to explain his conduct he told them there was no such place, that for twenty years he had been seeking it, but not having found it, he was going back to refresh himself with the things he he had so foolishly renounced. Christian said to his companion, "Is it true which this man hath said?" I commend to you particularly Hopeful's answer. "Take heed, he is one of the Flatterers; remember what it hath cost us once already for harkening to such kind of fellows. What! no Mount Zion! Did we not see from the Delectable Mountains the gate of the city? Also are we not now to walk by faith? Let us on, lest the man with the whip overtakes us again. You should have taught me that lesson which I will round you in the ears withal: 'Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge:' I say, my brother, cease to hear him, and let us believe to the saving of the soul." Christian told his friend that his question was intended only to prove him, adding, "As for this man, I know he is blinded by the God of this world." Then Hopeful exclaimed, "Now do I rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," and the Dreamer adds, "So they turned away from the man, and he, laughing at them, went his way." This was *Atheist*, no dissembler, but "the fool who sayeth in his heart, there is no God." There are many such in society, the bold rejectors of the Deity altogether, and the profane scorers of all truth and godliness.

Such tell you they have sought the Celestial City. A profession of religion, in which blinded fanaticism and folly were the strong elements, has been the miserable substitute for the broken heart and contrite spirit which would have brought them to their knees and wrung from their lips the Publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And what a beautiful commentary was the conduct of our Pilgrims on those words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, "now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The sneers and blasphemy of *Atheist* had no influence upon them. Hopeful could look on the "*note of the way*" and encourage himself with the words of the wise man. Moreover, he drew upon their experience and felt they were not following any "cunningly devised fables." "Did we not see from the Delectable Mountains the gate of the City?" and, realizing the life of faith, he could say "now do I rejoice in the glory of God." Let it be ever so with us. Let us shun the company of *Atheist* as we would a pestilence. Never suffer his laugh to shake your confidence for a moment.

"An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended."

The depth to which the Atheist has sunk is fearful to contemplate. Truly, as Christian said, "he is blinded by the God of this world." To gaze upward upon the glorious sun or downward on the

lovely flowers, to see beneath the microscope the wing of a fly, or through the telescope a firmament of worlds, and then to say "there is no God," is to reach a condition which demands perhaps more of our pity than our censure.

But, blessed be God, *Atheist* is no match for the believer. We who have "known the loving kindness of the Lord," especially those of us who have seen with the eye of faith the gates of the City from the mounts of Christian experience, remember how one wrote "Fools make a mock of sin," and we know at the Day of Judgment sin will make a mock at fools. "We walk by faith not by sight." "Here we have no continuing City, but we seek one to come." Oh, let us rely on Christ and rejoice in our evidences. We must have the witness of the Spirit if we are to be "strong and of good courage." But here is our confidence, not in ourselves, not in our Church, not in our Ministers, "nay in all these things we are more than conquerors *through him that loved us*. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. viii. 37-39.

This brings us to the second point suggested for our consideration.

2. LOVING INTERCOURSE.—There has been much of this already, but now it is to be in a special degree the communion of saints. "*They that feared*

the Lord spake often one to another." "I then saw in my dream, that they went on until they came into a certain country whose air tended naturally to make one drowsy if he came a stranger into it." This was the *Enchanted Ground* of which the shepherds had told them. They were to take heed not to sleep there. Hopeful seems to have forgotten the warning, for, growing so drowsy that he could scarcely open his eyes, he said to his companion, "let us lie down here and take a nap." Christian prevented the indulgence, and reminded him of what the shepherds had said. Hopeful acknowledged his fault and professed his gratitude to his companion for his escape from death. Christian then added: "Now then, brother, to prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse."

Let us pause for a moment here. *The Enchanted Ground* reminds us of those words in the Acts of the Apostles: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee and, Samaria, and were edified." There were such seasons—breathing time but for which God's suffering people would be worn out—but it is a question whether these are the best days of the Church. Too much sunshine is good for neither plants nor Christians. Worldly prosperity has probably done far more harm to the cause of God's truth than worldly adversity. Bunyan knew this. He knew that times of ease and freedom from persecution were times of special danger to the Church. The tendency of men at such seasons is not to exertion, but rather to forgetfulness and sleep. It may be, the great Dreamer meant to teach the

Church of God that lesson when he made His Pilgrims pass over the *Enchanted Ground*.

In the discourse which followed—the loving intercourse of the Pilgrims—we have the narration of Hopeful's experience. The whole deserves a most careful perusal. It is as full of beauty as it is of power. Christian asked his companion for an account of his conversion and then Hopeful gave him a description of the various steps which had led to his then happy condition.

It seems that he, like the rest in the town of Vanity, was fascinated and delighted with the things at the Fair, but that the conduct of Christian and Faithful had led him to see that “the end of these things is death.” But, though arrested, he was not soon brought under the power of conviction of sin; and the reasons were, he was ignorant that this was God's work, sin was so sweet he could not leave it, he knew not how to part with his old companions, and he tried to put away from him the hours when the convictions came upon him. But he failed. Things about him, scenes that occurred, brought his sins to mind again, and he resolved to try amendment of life. He fled from his sins, from sinful company, and took to praying, reading, weeping for sin, and speaking truth to his neighbours.

At first he fancied he was well, but his trouble was renewed. Such sayings as “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” “When ye have done all these things, say, we are unprofitable,” brought all back again and made him see the folly of thinking of

heaven by the law. He looked at it thus: "If a man run a hundred pounds into the shopkeeper's debt, and after that shall pay for all that he shall fetch: yet his old debt stands still in the books uncrossed, for the which the shopkeeper may sue him, and cast him into prison till he shall have paid the debt." Applying this he saw not how he could be freed from the damnation which he had brought upon himself by his former transgressions. At last he broke his mind to Faithful who directed him to the righteousness of Christ, showed him how he must trust to what Jesus had done for him, and how His doings and worthiness should be imputed to him if he only believed. Faithful removed all Hopeful's objections by showing him he was invited, and gave him a book of Jesus' own indicting. Further he urged him to earnest prayer, bidding him go to Him who sits upon the Mercy Seat all the year long to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come, and say to this effect—"God be merciful to me a sinner, and make me know and believe in Jesus Christ; for I see that if His righteousness had not been, or I have not faith in that righteousness, I am cast away. Lord, I have heard that Thou art a merciful God, and hast ordained that Thy Son Jesus Christ should be the Saviour of the world; and, moreover, that Thou art willing to bestow Him upon such a poor sinner as I am (and I am a sinner indeed). Lord, take, therefore, this opportunity, magnify Thy grace in the salvation of my soul, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen." Hopeful further informed Christian how he did as Faithful had told him, "over, and over,

and over," how God did not for long reveal the Son to him, how hundreds of times he thought of leaving off praying, and when Christian asked him why he did not leave off, he replied, "I believe that it was true which hath been told me. And withal this came into my mind 'if it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and will not tarry.' So I continued praying until the Father showed me His Son." Sweetly he continued—One day when very sad, looking for hell and damnation, he thought he saw the Lord Jesus who said to him—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Precious assurances of strength, acceptance, and salvation followed, until his heart was full of joy, his eyes full of tears, and his affections running over with love to the name, people, and ways of Jesus Christ. My reader, how clearly is the way of peace unfolded to us in all this. We have the full and complete picture of man lost and ruined, and man redeemed and saved. Like Hopeful let us go to Him that sits upon the throne with nothing but the sinner's cry; like him let us resolve to perish, if perish we must, at the throne of grace; like him let us look for righteousness in Christ's person, and satisfaction for our sins by His blood, and, seeing so much beauty in Christ Jesus, let us long, as the very highest joy we can possess, to do something for His honour and His name, and revel in the thought that His love has washed away all our sins to be remembered no more for ever.

"Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved ;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.

Through many a danger, toil, and war,
I have already come ;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the vail,
A life of joy and peace.



TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

IGNORANCE.

“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

—ROMANS x. 2, 3.

WE have in these words from the pen of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles a description of tens of thousands. In the fact announced here we have the key which unlocks the mystery of the world’s ungodliness. We often wonder how it is so few accept the simple terms of the Gospel. We feel discouraged at the little success which appears to attend the preaching of the Word of Life. We are surprised that with all the Church machinery at work there is no revival of religion. Let these two verses explain all. Among those who are brought

beneath the sound of the Truth the great majority “are ignorant of God’s righteousness, and are going about to establish their own righteousness.” Vast numbers of professing Christians are slaves of erroneous ideas which they carefully nurse, totally unaware of the fact that they are the inspiration of the Father of Lies. Such are described by the Apostle Paul in our text, and such are photographed to the life by Bunyan in his character of *Ignorance*, who appears again upon the scene, and has to engage a little more of our attention to-day.

We have already had to do with this man. I may recall him to you by reminding you that Christian and Hopeful met him just as they had left the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains. You will remember this man came from the country of Conceit, that Bunyan described him as “a very brisk lad,” and that I further observed that, while he appeared to know a very great deal, he really knew very little. Now, after the deeply interesting details of Hopeful’s experience, *Ignorance*, who had been left behind, was seen following. The travellers were not yet off *the Enchanted Ground*, and therefore, that the spirit of slumber, the great danger of the place, might not overcome them, they determined, like wise and thoughtful pilgrims, to “talk away the time.” This gave rise to the conversation with *Ignorance*, deeply instructive, and affording more precious doctrinal teaching respecting points of vital importance, concerning which multitudes have “erred from the faith” and made shipwreck of the soul.

I must suppose that you have read the chapter

which is to furnish us with instruction on this occasion. Christian and Hopeful fall into conversation with *Ignorance*, and the disposition he manifested may be profitably considered under the following divisions :—

1. ENTIRE SELF-SATISFACTION.
2. CONFIDENCE IN HIS OWN HEART.
3. A VAIN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.
4. CONTEMPT OF GOD'S SPECIAL REVELATION.

1. ENTIRE SELF-SATISFACTION.—Christian and Hopeful tarried for *Ignorance*, and as he came up Christian said to him: “Come away, man, why do you stay behind?” Observe the answer—“I take my pleasure in walking alone; even more a great deal than in company; unless I like it better?” Any might know that this man came from the country of *Conceit*. Such people like to walk alone, and stand alone too, like that proud Pharisee of old who prayed with himself, and thanked God that he was not as other men are. Well has one said: “the prouder a man is, the more he thinks he deserves; and the more he thinks he deserves, the less he really does deserve. The proud man—the whole world is not big enough to serve him.” Thus was it with *Ignorance* as we shall see with a little further consideration. Nothing could exceed the self-satisfaction of *Ignorance*. It was perfect of its kind. Let us look at the discussion.

CHRISTIAN: How stands it between God and your soul now?

IGNORANCE : I hope well, for I am always full of good notions that come into my mind to comfort me as I walk.

CHRISTIAN : What good notions? Pray tell us.

IGNORANCE : Why I think of God and Heaven.

CHRISTIAN : So do the devils and damned souls.

IGNORANCE : But I think of them and desire them.

CHRISTIAN : So do many that are never likely to come there. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing."

IGNORANCE : But I think of them, and leave all for them.

Now let us just analyse, as far as we have gone, this man's mind. None could doubt he was thoroughly satisfied with himself. These good things which came into his mind were proof enough for him that he possessed the true religion, and the fact that he thought of God and heaven and desired them, so much so that he had even resigned all for them, left his piety beyond dispute. In meeting these vain notions Christian pointed out that which evidently *Ignorance* did not know. If thinking of God and heaven is the sum total of religion the devils and damned souls possess it. If to desire God and heaven is all that is required, it is strange that so many do so and yet never reach the place. As to having left all for them the thing was sooner said than done. This was the mode of argument with which Christian met this self-satisfied professor. And who that has had anything to do with professors of religion has not met persons represented by

Bunyan's character of *Ignorance*? What can you do with a sinner thoroughly satisfied with himself? Such flatter themselves that all is right because they have at certain times been subjects of a few desires after good things, and because they have been willing to sacrifice a little worldly advantage for their sake. Such persons are in total ignorance of the fact that the mere surrender of the intellect to the evidences of Christianity is no proof that they are converted, inasmuch as the devils and lost souls "believe and tremble." It is a homely saying, but a true one, "Hell is paved with good intentions," and we may rest assured that there will be many among the lost at the last day who will be able to look back on certain periods of their past history when they had *the desire* to be saved.

The quotation with which Christian clinched his argument is enough to show *a wish*, however good, can effect very little. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing." The spirit of *Ignorance* was precisely that of the Pharisee—"God, I thank thee I am not as other men are." The cry of Job was "I abhor myself." The confession of Ezra was "God, I am ashamed," but the language of *Ignorance* was "I am always full of good notions."

Self-satisfaction is the miserable offspring of Ignorance. It is hateful in God's sight, because in it He sees the wretched effort of the sinner to glorify himself. Until this foul weed is plucked up and destroyed there can be no sense of sin, and no felt-need of Christ. We have not mastered the first letter of the spiritual alphabet until we have learned

to say : " For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

" Lord, when Thy Spirit deigns to show
The badness of our hearts,
Astonished at the amazing view
The soul with horror starts.

The dungeon op'ning, foul as hell,
Its loathsome stench emits ;
And, brooding in each secret cell,
Some hideous monster sits.

Swarms of ill thoughts their bane diffuse,
Proud, envious, false, unclean ;
And every ransack'd corner shows
Some unsuspected sin."

The second thing to be noticed in the disposition of *Ignorance* is,

2. CONFIDENCE IN HIS OWN HEART.—Let us resume the argument.

CHRISTIAN : But why, or for what, art thou persuaded that thou hast left all for God and heaven ?

IGNORANCE : My heart tells me so.

CHRISTIAN : The wise man says " He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

IGNORANCE : That is spoken of an evil heart, but mine is a good one.

CHRISTIAN : But how dost thou prove that ?

IGNORANCE : It comforts me in hopes of heaven.

CHRISTIAN : That may be through its deceitfulness ; for a man's heart may minister comfort to him in the hopes of that thing for which he has yet no ground to hope.

IGNORANCE : But my heart and life agree together, and therefore my hope is well grounded.

CHRISTIAN : Who told thee that thy heart and life agreed together ?

IGNORANCE : My heart tells me so.

The one witness which *Ignorance* brought into court was *his own heart*. Here was his confidence. Its miserable flattery had been “as the sound of a pleasant instrument” in his ears, and he was satisfied. Now, this false idea could only be cherished in utter ignorance of the fact that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;” and that its “hopes of heaven” were mere delusions—nothing better than the promptings of a nature unrenewed by divine grace. Well might Christian reply to all this false reasoning, “Thy heart tells thee so! except the word of God beareth witness in this matter, other testimony is of no value.”

It is quite true, as Christian pointed out, a good heart has good thoughts, and that a good life is according to God’s commandments, but, he wisely added, “it is one thing indeed to *have* these, and another thing only to *think* so.” Further, Christian insisted on the fact that only those thoughts respecting ourselves can be considered good which agree with the Word of God, and that our thoughts of ourselves agree with the Word of God when we pass the same judgment upon ourselves which the Word passes. And what is the testimony of this inspired witness? Thus Christian gives it—“To explain myself: the Word of God saith of persons in a natural condition ‘There is none righteous, there is

none that doeth good.' It saith also that 'every imagination of the heart is only evil, and that continually.' And again, 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.' Now, then, when we think thus of ourselves, having sense thereof, then our thoughts are good ones, because according to the Word of God." This point of the discussion fairly brought *Ignorance* to a stand still. The self-deception of the man came out in all its nakedness. He said, "I will never believe my heart is thus bad." Christian at once showed him that here was proof that he had never had one good thought concerning himself in his life, and further, that, as the Word passes judgment on our ways as well as our hearts, only when the thoughts of our hearts and ways agree with the judgment of the Word can they be good. Explaining his meaning, he proved from the Word of God that man's ways are crooked, not good, but perverse, and thoroughly established the position that only when a man thus thinketh of his ways, "hath he good thoughts of his own ways, because his thoughts now agree with the judgment of the Word of God." He applied the same reasoning to good thoughts concerning God.

Confidence in our own hearts is another child of *Ignorance*. The heart is no trustworthy witness. "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." It is only when our hearts and lives are in strict accordance with the Word of God, man's clear and unerring guide, that we are right and safe. Let us be on our guard against the rock of self-confidence on which so

many thousands have struck and perished. Walk in the light—the light of God’s Truth, as revealed in the pages of the inspired Word. The heart may deceive, but this cannot.

“Walk in the light! and sin, abhorred,
Shall ne’er defile again;
The blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord,
Shall cleanse from every stain.

Walk in the light! and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined
In whom no darkness is.”

The third thing to be noticed in the disposition of *Ignorance* is,

3. A VAIN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.—Asked to give a profession of his faith *Ignorance* pertly replied, “Why, to be short, I think I must believe in Christ for justification.” Christian expressed his surprise at this avowal, as he could see no need of Him, and as he evidently considered his doings as rendering Christ’s personal righteousness for justification before God unnecessary. *Ignorance* answered, “I believe well enough for that,” and when pressed for more, he went on, “I believe that Christ died for sinners; and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through His gracious acceptance of my obedience to His law. Or thus: Christ makes my duties that are religious acceptable to His Father by virtue of His merits, and so I shall be justified.”

Christian swept away his foundation of sand—his refuge of lies—by declaring in the first place that

such a faith as this was *fantastical*, having no ground in God's Word; in the second place it was *false* resting entirely on his own obedience, and setting aside Christ altogether; in the third place it was *perplexing*, making Christ the justifier of his actions instead of his person, and his person alone for his actions' sake; and in the last place it was *deceptive*, inasmuch as it left him under wrath in the day of God Almighty. Then beautifully Christian preached to *Ignorance* the true doctrine of *justification*—"for true justifying faith puts the soul, as sensible of its lost condition by the law, upon flying for refuge unto Christ's righteousness, which righteousness of His is not an act of grace by which He maketh, for justification, thy obedience accepted with God, but his personal obedience to the law, is doing and suffering for us what that required at our hands; this righteousness, I say, true faith accepteth; under the skirt of which the soul being shrouded, and by it presented as spotless before God, it is accepted, and acquitted from condemnation." On hearing this *Ignorance* advanced the old objection, that such a doctrine, demanding that we should "trust to what Christ in His own person hath done for us" would lead to licentiousness of life, and Christian administered to him a rebuke as strong as it was deserved. "Ignorance is thy name, and as thy name is so art thou; even as this thy answer demonstrateth what I say. Ignorant thou art of what justifying righteousness is, and as ignorant how to secure thy soul, through the faith of it, from the heavy wrath of God. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true effects of saving faith in

this righteousness of Christ which is to bow and win over the heart of God in Christ, to love His name, His word, ways, and people, and not as thou ignorantly imaginest."

There are tens of thousands who can talk about religion—lay claim to frames and feelings and "visions of the night"—who are in total ignorance of this great Christian doctrine—the imputed righteousness of Christ. Their continual effort is to "establish their own righteousness." Every unconverted man is a Romanist at heart, and many a professed protestant shrinks from accepting the whole, undiluted doctrine of "justification by faith alone," the article, as Luther called it, of a standing or a falling Church. My reader, take care you are right here. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This great doctrine is one of the foundation stones of Christianity. We do not pretend to understand the fulness of the mystery, but that there is this wonderful exchange between Christ and the sinner we have no doubt. Christ the innocent is accounted guilty, that we the guilty might be accounted innocent. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." *Ignorance* knew nothing of this. He was in total darkness as to his own sinfulness, and therefore was an entire stranger to Christ who as the Sinner's substitute has suffered in his stead.

Beloved, whatever else you do not know take care that you know this. The truth of Christ's substitu-

tionary sacrifice may be humbling but it is exceedingly precious. It is the only doctrine which can give peace and "bow and win over the heart of God in Christ." May we have clear views concerning it.

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress !
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay ?
Fully absolved through these I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame."

The last thing I have to notice in the disposition of *Ignorance* is,

4. CONTEMPT OF GOD'S SPECIAL REVELATION.
—"Ask him," said Hopeful, "if ever he had Christ revealed to him from heaven." This at once aroused the ridicule of Ignorance. "What! you are a man for revelations! I do believe that what both you and all the rest of you say about that matter is but the fruit of distracted brains." To this Hopeful calmly replied: "Why man! Christ is so hid in God from natural apprehension of all flesh that He cannot by any man be savingly known unless God the Father reveals Him to him." Ignorance sneeringly answered: "That is your faith, but not mine: yet mine, I doubt not, is as good as yours, though I have not in my head so many whimsies as you." The discussion closed with an earnest and faithful appeal from Christian. "Give me leave to put in a word: you ought not so slightly to speak of this matter; for this I will boldly affirm (even as my good companion

hath done) that no man can know Jesus Christ but by the revelation of the Father. Yea, and faith too, by which the soul layeth hold upon Christ (if it be right) must be wrought by the exceeding greatness of His mighty power: the working of which faith, I perceive, poor Ignorance, thou art ignorant of. Be awakened, then, see thine own wretchedness, and fly to the Lord Jesus; and by His righteousness which is the righteousness of God (for He Himself is God) thou shalt be delivered from condemnation."

My reader, let the character we have to-day been considering lead each of us to deep searchings of heart. We are all in danger of falling upon the rock of self-righteousness. Let us pray against every one of the false notions which made Ignorance the enemy of God and caused him to perish at last. Let us take care that we have clear views about sin, clear views of the necessity for Christ's atoning death and sufficient righteousness, clear views of the need of divine revelation to the soul, the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us not be ashamed to hold all these cardinal points of old-fashioned but thoroughly Scriptural theology. We want nothing better than that which Apostles taught and in defence of which martyrs died. This I desire to see the teaching of every pulpit in the land. I have faith in nothing else. Whoever treats such teaching lightly is a member of the family of *Ignorance*, and, whatever his station or his learning, he is in danger of losing his soul. Let us not be afraid boldly to declare this. It is not charity to

withhold the truth. When a man is in peril he is his best friend who warns him of it.

Oh, let us cling to the fact of salvation being entirely of grace, not of works. Not one of us can do any more for his soul than the dying thief could do for his when he was nailed hand and foot to the cross. There is no new Saviour—no new way to heaven. Lost in Adam—saved in Christ—must be preached as earnestly, as frequently as ever.

God grant us the humility, simplicity, and teachableness of little children, and, committing both body and soul to an all-working, unslumbering God, let us pillow our heads on divine promises, and know that having Christ we have heaven. Possessing this we need ask no more.

“The babe, the bride, the quiet dead,
Clad in peculiar raiment all,
Yet each puts on the spotless white
Of cradle, shroud, and bridal hall.

O cradle of our youngest age
Adorned with white, how fair art thou ;
O robe of infancy, how bright !
Like moonlight on the moorland snow.

O bridal hall, and bridal robe,
How silver-bright your jewelled gleam !
Like sunrise on the gentle face
Of some translucent mountain stream.

O shroud of death, so soft and pure,
Like starlight upon marble fair ;
Ah, surely it is life, not death,
That in still beauty sleepeth there.

Mine be a robe more spotless still,
With lustre bright that cannot fade ;
Purer and whiter than the robe
Of babe, or bride, or quiet dead.

Mine be the raiment given of God,
Wrought of fine linen clean and white,
Fit for the eye of God to see,
Meet for His home of holy light.



TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

TEMPORARY.

“ They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for had they been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”—
1 JOHN ii. 19.

THESE words were written by St. John concerning certain persons who in the early Church professed the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, and had apostatized from it to become teachers of error. Such language would be written down with deep sorrow of heart. The apostates had probably gone great lengths in their pretensions. They had made glaring profession of their attachment to the Saviour, and of their experience of the peace and joy attached to a life of piety. It may be they had been prominent members of the Church, foremost in acts of benevolence, leaders at the prayer meeting, distinguished above all others for their

Christian zeal. But they had proved nothing better than rocky-ground hearers. Like the figtree our Lord condemned, they were all leaves and no fruit. Like these whited sepulchres to which He likened the miserable Pharisees, their beauty was all outside. And, we must observe, it was not that these apostates had been *real Christians*. On the contrary, St. John plainly declares that they never had been. "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.*"

And, further, we must notice that such melancholy departures were permitted by the great Founder of the Church, and had their uses. Though ministers would be disappointed and the Lord's people pained, all was governed by a wisdom which could not err, and a love which could not fail. Such would surely issue in the purification of the Church and in glory to its divine Head, "*but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*"

Such is apostolic teaching about apostacy. And this is the subject which our allegory suggests to us to-day.

To this, therefore, let me now ask your attention. We will glance at our subject under the following divisions.

1. THE STORY OF TEMPORARY.
2. THE REASONS FOR HIS FALLING AWAY, AND THE MANNER THEREOF.
3. A WARNING AGAINST BACKSLIDING.

1. THE STORY OF TEMPORARY.—Christian and

Hopeful having fully discussed the character of Ignorance, and dwelt with becoming solemnity on the blessing of true or right fear, convictions of which the ignorant only strive to stifle, “fall upon another profitable question.” This had reference to a certain *Temporary* whom they had both known about ten years ago. He dwelt in *Graceless*, a town about two miles off *Honesty*; and his next door neighbour was one *Turnback*. Indeed, he lived under the same roof as *Turnback*. Now, this man *Temporary* had at one time had some sight of his sins, and of the wages due to them, at least Christian thought so, and Hopeful agreed with him, for he could recall how *Temporary* had oftentimes been in his house (only three miles from his own) with many tears.

“Truly,” said Hopeful, “I pitied the man, and was not altogether without hope of him; but one may see it is not every one that cries, Lord, Lord.” It seems that *Temporary* told Christian once that he resolved to go on a pilgrimage, but having all of a sudden grown acquainted with one *Save-self*, all friendship between them had ceased.

This was the story of *Temporary*, and a sad one it is. The character of this backslider is introduced for our instruction. There were, no doubt, many backsliders in Bunyan’s day, and their name is “Legion” in our own. Backsliding has been a very prevalent sin in every age of the Church. We remember how promising was Saul, King of Israel, how those who before time had known him asked the question with wonder “Is Saul also among the prophets?” and we recall too how the word of the

Lord came to Samuel, "It repenteth Me that I made Saul to be King, for he is turned back from following Me and hath not performed My commandments."

Who can forget how the miserable man went from bad to worse, casting off all restraint, and yielding himself to the dominion of Satan, until jealousy, murder, and the patronage of witchcraft became his steps to crime, and culminated in suicide and the destruction of his guilty house?

We learn that it is possible to have convictions of sin, and yet know nothing about conversion to God. We see that it is possible to make the best of resolutions, and yet close our career in disastrous failure. Accurate knowledge of the way of salvation, earnest desire to renounce our sins and serve God, a real determination to live better and truer lives in the world, may not be the effectual work of the Spirit after all. It is a melancholy reflection, but undoubtedly a fact, that we may go great lengths in conviction of sin, endure probably as much agony of mind and sorrow of heart as those savingly converted, and yet never reach the feet of the Saviour nor find pardon, peace, and heaven. Surely this may well stir up within us solemn inquiries concerning our souls. If this is true—if, like *Temporary*, we may be thoroughly "resolved to go on a pilgrimage," and yet be all the while deceiving ourselves, we need to pray with poor David, who, conscious of his weakness, knew well his danger, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Until *Temporary* became acquainted with *Save-self* he went on well, but the moment he made a friend of this arch deceiver he became a stranger to Christian. Thus it has been with tens of thousands. They have been deceived by warm feelings and good resolutions. A passing interest in good things, a measure of excitement under some earnest ministry, a more decided inclination to the ordinances of religion have been mistaken for the genuine work of God in the soul. The fervour of such is like the sunshine of an April day. Like Jonah's gourd, which grew in one night, it is very soon gone. The voice of *Save-self* speedily prevails, and those who pitied the man and were not altogether without hope of him, see to their sorrow that he never really ceased to lean unto his own wisdom, and had never truly renounced confidence in his own righteousness. Oh, the souls that have been ruined by making a friend of *Save-self*. The first blast of opposition has destroyed their fine crop of good desires, and snapped the best of their resolutions asunder like a rotten bough.

The story of *Temporary* is very sad but very instructive. It should lead every one of us to deep searchings of heart. Is the root of the matter in us? Have we really abandoned all idea of being able to *save ourselves*? These are questions we may well ask our souls. But more of this presently.

Resuming our consideration of *Temporary* let us see

2. THE REASONS FOR HIS FALLING AWAY AND THE MANNER THEREOF.—These came out in the con-

versation between Christian and Hopeful. Hopeful suggested the desirableness of inquiring into the reason for the sudden backsliding of such characters as *Temporary*. By Christian's request Hopeful gave his view on this important subject.

The first reason he supplied was *the absence of any real change of mind*. The power of guilt which had led to such a profession of interest in divine things very soon wore away, and all earnestness ceased with it. The natural result was a return to the old way. The only impelling force in such cases being a sense and fear of the torments of hell, when these cool and depart the desires for heaven and salvation cool and depart with them. A relapse into the world is inevitable. "It is happened unto them according to the proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."—2 Peter ii. 22.

The second reason Hopeful gave was *the fear of man*. The thought of future punishment makes such persons as *Temporary* superior to this for a time, but their terror diminishing, "second thoughts" take possession of their minds, and carnal policy decides for them that it is very unwise for them to run the risk of losing all and courting unavoidable and unnecessary trouble. The result is sure—"they fall in with the world again."

The third reason Hopeful gave was *the dread of shame*. In the hearts of such persons as *Temporary* are pride and haughtiness, and they are always more or less disturbed by the fact of religion being low and contemptible. They are perpetually asking that old

question: "Have any of the Pharisees believed on Him?" Strong fears concerning "the wrath to come" may put this into the background for a time, but, through the influence of *Save-self*, it will soon prevail, and the world, never really forsaken, is the only refuge that remains to them.

The last reason that Hopeful gave was *the love of present ease*. All this sense of guilt and fear for the future is unpleasant, and grows distasteful. Shunned by positive effort it gradually ceases, and, hardening their hearts, such vain professors deliberately choose the way which will surely serve to harden them more and more, and "the end thereof are the ways of death."

Christian expressed his opinion that Hopeful was "pretty near the business," and summing up the four reasons in one he said, "for the bottom of all is, for want of a change in their mind and will." And nothing could well surpass the importance of this conclusion. Argue about apostacy as we may, this fact supplies us with the strong and sufficient reason—the want of a change in mind and will. Without this all else is valueless and vain, and will be sure to end in entire departure. A man wanting this has no true sense of his guilt, and no felt need of his Saviour. Temporary dread of the future may possess him, but he knows nothing really of the nature of sin, and has no thought of that righteousness which can alone constitute his title to heaven. The fact is, he is altogether a stranger to the new birth, and, hence it is, the showy crop of leaves which, beneath the warmth of some surrounding circum-

stances, has grown so speedily and plentifully, soon perishes, and he has no course left to him but to fall back upon the world as unrepentent, as unpardoned, as unsaved as ever.

My reader, our prayer must be "create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." The miserable phariseeism of *Save-self* must be renounced as hateful in God's sight, and the prayer of the broken-hearted publican must rise tremblingly to our lips—"God be merciful to me a sinner." Without this we may be gaudy professors, carrying about with us a professional air of piety perfectly bewitching to the weak-spirited and weak-headed of our churches, but we cannot be saved—it is impossible—for Christ said "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Hopeful having thus given the *reasons* of such persons as *Temporary* going back, begged Christian to show to him *the manner* thereof. Having discerned *why* apostates throw off their profession of religion he would see *how* they manage so easily to do it.

Christian replies, and his answer is so simple and intelligible that we cannot do better than transcribe for you his own words. "So I willingly will. They draw off their thoughts, all that they may, from the remembrance of God, death and judgment to come. Then they cast off by degrees private duties, as closet prayer, curbing their lusts, watching, sorrow for sin, and the like; then they shun the company of lively and warm Christians; after that they grow cold to public duty, as hearing,

reading, godly conference, and the like : then they begin to pick holes, as we say, in the coats of some of the godly, and that devilishly, that they may have a seeming colour to throw religion (for the sake of some infirmities they have spied in them) behind their backs ; then they begin to adhere to, and associate themselves with carnal, loose, and wanton men ; then they give way to carnal and wanton discourses in secret ; and glad are they if they can see such things in any that are counted honest that they may the more boldly do it through their example. After this, they begin to play with little sins openly ; and then being hardened, they show themselves as they are. Thus, being launched again into the gulf of misery, unless a miracle of grace prevent it, they everlastingly perish in their own deceivings."

The great thing to notice in this description is that apostacy is an inclined plane. Once on the descent, but for the miracle of grace, the end is inevitable destruction. No one who has been engaged in the ministry can have escaped sad instances which have come across his own experience. And we must notice how completely this sin, like every other sin, is traceable to ourselves. It is not that God appoints a temptation too strong for us, or withdraws from us the assistance of His Spirit. The fault is exclusively our own. We are not compelled to yield to the promptings of Satan and our own hearts. It is this every apostate does. *Save-self* comes off conqueror in the battle. Once more "in the gulf of misery"—drawing off by deliberate effort all thoughts from God, weaning his sympathies from prayer, and

neglecting all watchfulness over self, shunning the company of the pious, and discovering in their infirmities a defence of his own change of views, making good friends of those who are irreligious and ungodly, first indulging in little inconsistencies, and then committing open sins, he at last comes forth in his true character, one indeed which he had never truly lost, the enemy of all righteousness, the child of the devil, destined, in spite of all he has felt and known, to perish in his own deceiving. Oh, what a commentary on the passage which stands at the head of our chapter—"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Temporary offers a very solemn warning to all professors of religion. Such a character was wanted to make Bunyan's great lesson-book complete. This must be our last point.

3. A WARNING AGAINST BACKSLIDING.—Thorough apostacy is one of the darkest crimes that can be committed against heaven. After having admitted belief in Christianity, professed to have embraced its principles and to have been inspired by its hopes, either to go back to Judaism, as was perhaps the case at times in the early Church, or to adopt some system of Infidelity as is sometimes the case now, is to "crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put Him to an open shame." And when we know how there have been those who, like Judas, have

professed allegiance to Christ and then have deliberately in spirit betrayed Him, who have made a loud profession of their faith in the Redeemer, and have lived to cast off even the last lingering remains of respect for religion, where is the Christian who does not lift up the prayer of the Psalmist, "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe?" But what of "the perseverance of the Saints." I am not careful to maintain any of the theories which mark the several schools of religious thought. I want nothing broader and nothing narrower than the Bible. I believe in the power and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am quite sure He exercises a loving care over His people, without which they would stumble every moment, and come short of their promised home at last. I know too that I am a person and not a thing—a respectable being, and not a lump of inert unintelligent matter. And what does this teach me? Why, it teaches me that I must watch and pray. I see in the case of Judas that immense religious privileges cannot keep me out of hell. I see in the case of Peter that even a converted heart cannot preserve me from backsliding very far from Christ. Is this not enough to send me to my knees and make me implore that God in whose strength alone I can persevere to the end will give me daily, hourly supplies of grace? Is this not enough to demolish the last remnant of pride and self-conceit in my heart, and keep me at the foot of the Cross, reliant only on that righteousness which is perfect and sufficient, and dependent entirely on that grace which can alone bring me to the presence of the King?

My reader, the character of *Temporary* has been common enough in every age of the Church. Such persons have gone out from us, because they were not with us, but the great lesson of their departure is, "Be not high-minded, but fear." Be it yours and mine to know our weakness, and to lean on the Strong for strength, to be assured that as we needed the Spirit to call us at the first so we need the Spirit to guide and sustain us even to the end. But let the assurance of God's unfailing love and ever ready help encourage us to steady perseverance in every good word and work.

Many of God's true saints have fallen—let this keep us from presumption. God is on our side and the angels are interested in us—let this keep us from despair. Let us work heavenward as if all depended upon ourselves, and let us take care that underlying every effort is the conviction that all is depending upon God. There is no safety but beneath the wing of God's loving Providence. Backsliding is just the soul's daring venture upon strange ground. He who is close to God can defy all enemies within or without.

Our Pilgrims are off the Enchanted Ground. All danger is over, and what their eyes shall soon behold shall surpass their brightest dreams. The pilgrimage shortens at every step, and, almost home, they seem to breath the air of the Celestial City. Faith has one more triumph to achieve and the Pilgrims will be at rest.

“ From earth retiring,
Heavenward aspiring,
All my long day's work below now done ;

Calmly reclining,
All unrepining,
 Jesus, let me lean on Thy love alone.

On love relying,
Thy love undying,
 Not a shade can fall upon my soul ;
Here am I resting,
The joy foretasting,
 Of life beyond this dark life's goal.

Thine arms embracing,
Each shadow chasing,
 Chains of flesh now cease my soul to hold ;
Pilgrim's staff breaking,
Royal badge taking,
 Earth's torn raiment all exchanged for gold.

No more low-caring,
No more way-faring,
 The soil'd sandals loosed and flung away,
Done with the soiling,
Done with the toiling,
 All my burdens lay I down for aye.

Pain yet assails me,
Strength oft-times fails me,
 Yet my weakness is my strength and rest ;
Light o'er me stealing,
Softly revealing
 Scenes of glory up among the blest.

Head no more sinking,
Eyes no more shrinking,
 From the world's gay glitter here below ;
Life's cup just draining,
Time's star fast waning—
 Christ Jesus receive my soul! To Thee I go.

Earth is retreating,
Heaven is me greeting,
 Hope lighting up new scenes above ;
Tranquilly lying,
Peacefully dying,
 Jesus beckons upward to His love.'

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

THE LAND OF BEULAH.

“*Perfect peace.*”—ISAIAH xxvi. 3.

OUR Pilgrims are nearing their journey's end. Every step they take makes the distance less that lies between their beating hearts and the Celestial City. They have passed *the Enchanted Ground* in safety, and as they step into *the Land of Beulah* they feel that the shadows are gone, and that in the border-country of their bright home the sunshine of Heaven is about them at last.

And as we bring them to “the rest that remaineth,” and see the light of the City of God fall on them, do we not turn in thought to the close of our lives, and pray that in the enjoyment of “*perfect peace*” we may tread the Land of Beulah, breathe the sweetness of the air, and feel the warmth of the sun in the glorious prospect of our going

home? “*Perfect peace*”—this is what we desire. For what should we care if this be the sunset of our lives? Now—now, my reader, let us try to sing

“This is the day of toil,
Beneath earth's sultry noon,
This is the day of service true,
But the rest cometh soon.

The way may rougher grow,
The weariness increase,
We gird our loins, and hasten on;
The end, the end is peace.”

We will thus divide our subject for to-day :

1. THE LAND OF BEULAH.
2. WHAT THE PILGRIMS EXPERIENCED THERE.

1. THE LAND OF BEULAH.—“Now I saw in my dream that by this time the Pilgrims were got over the Enchanted Ground; and entering into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually ‘the singing of birds,’ and saw every day ‘the flowers appear in the earth,’ and heard ‘the voice of the turtle in the land.’ In this country the sun shineth night and day: wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was on the borders of

heaven. In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed; yea, here, 'as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth their God rejoice over them.' Here they had no want of corn and wine: for in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimage. Here they heard voices from out of the City, loud voices, saying 'Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh! Behold his reward is with him!' Here all the inhabitants called them 'the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, sought out,' &c.

Can anything be more exquisitely beautiful, or anything truer to the experience of the assured and happy Christian than this? *Beulah* signifies *married*, and, as used by Isaiah in his glorious prophecy recorded in his sixty-second chapter, it sets forth the return of the Bridegroom to his Bride, when, in the renewal of the marriage contract, the blessedness of the whole Church shall be everlastingly complete.

And in the application which the illustrious Dreamer makes of this we have a picture of the calm sunset of the Christian life, when, in perfect peace, the soul reposes upon God and walks in holy joy and expectation in the border land of its celestial home.

Do you, my reader, question the truth and reality of this description? Is all the joy, and peace, and assured safety involved in this glowing account of Beulah nothing but a poetical fiction to your mind? Let me tell you hundreds have known and felt it to be true. As the turmoil of life's long and

weary pilgrimage has ceased, as they have neared the haven where they would be, the sweet calm of assured confidence has settled on the soul as they have breathed the sweet and pleasant air of the better land, and the spirit has grown eager for flight as the music of that land has fallen upon Faith's ready ear, and filled the heart with holy and indescribable joy. Believe me, there have been such seasons in the history of God's people—seasons in which there has been no night, in which no shadows from the valley have fallen, where no arrow from Giant Despair could ever reach, and not a vestige of Doubting Castle could be seen. There have been saints who, in their ecstasy, have known the inhabitants of the city to have been about them, who have realized the renewal of that contract which made them one with their Lord to such an extent that they have not been able to express their joy. A satisfaction which has supplied every want, has filled the entire heart, and, hushed to rest on the bosom of a loved and loving Saviour, they have heard the voices from out of the City and longed to plunge into the dividing stream that they might reach the glories of the other side. Let us recall the experiences of a few.

Just a short time before his departure *Dr. Payson* said: "When I used to read Bunyan's description of Beulah, where the sun shines and the birds sing day and night, I used to doubt whether there was such a place. But now my own experience has convinced me of it, and it infinitely surpasses all my previous conceptions. I think the happiness I enjoy is similar to that enjoyed by glorified spirits

before the resurrection. I am going to Mount Zion, to the City of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First Born, and to God the judge of all. I can find no words to express my happiness. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me on to the great fountain."

We are told concerning *John Angel James* that during the last week of his life he was cheerful and happy under the consciousness of his approaching end. He talked much of heaven, and seemed to anticipate with great satisfaction "the rest that remaineth." We may fancy that we see this honoured servant of God being assisted up to his bedroom for the last time by his friend Dr. Evans. Turning to his kind helper he said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of *the least* of these thou hast done it unto me." Who can doubt Angel James was in the Land of Beulah? The bridgeless river had to be crossed, but he could sing

"Why should I shrink from pain or woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day?"

A little time before *Dr. Raffles* "fell asleep in Jesus" he repeated to his daughter-in-law the last hymn he had composed. It was written on the words, "In my Father's House are many mansions." He repeated it, his biographer states, most touchingly, and after he had concluded, exclaimed, "Yes, and there's one for me—I know it—I feel it?" On

another occasion he said, "I have no raptures, but I am thankful for calm and peace; my foundation stands strong; I have preached no cunningly devised fable." What was this but the air "very sweet and pleasant" of the Land of Beulah?

How glorious was the setting sun which *Dr. McCaul* enjoyed. Three days before his death he received the announcement of his approaching departure with the most admirable composure, nay even with cheerfulness. He declared his abounding comfort in these two texts, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19), and "When he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke xv. 20). "Upon these two texts," he said, "I take my stand;" adding, "nothing now remains but to endeavour to fall asleep as peacefully as possible in Jesus." The atmosphere of Beulah was about the departing saint, and, to borrow the words of one who knew him better though hardly venerated him more than myself, I would say of him: "Thus died in his fifty-sixth year, Dr. Alexander McCaul, a successor of Bishop Miles Coverdale, in the Rectory of St. Magnus, and one whose name will be mentioned as one of the wisest and most self-sacrificing of her sons as long as the Church of England continues in existence."

"The evening clouds," said *Eliot*, the Missionary, with his dying lips, "are passing away; the Lord whom I have served, like Polycarp, for eighty years, will not forsake me now. Oh, come in glory! I

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have long waited for Thy coming. Let no dark cloud rest on the work of the Indians; let it live when I am dead." Here his voice failed, and his last words were, "Welcome joy!"

"You are going home," said one to *Dr. Gordon*. "I feel at home already," he replied. To one at his bedside he observed: "My gracious God has been very merciful to me. He has given me a joy I never felt before, an inconceivable joy." And to another: "I have Christ by me. See Death! I see nothing but Christ."

I recall a dear boy to whose comfort it was my privilege to minister on his bed of death. He had long been a sufferer, and the pale face, sunken eye, and struggling breath showed that his feet were well nigh in the river. Well I remember how he trod the Land of Beulah. The air was truly "sweet and pleasant." "There was no night there." One day I said to him, "You will soon be in heaven." Looking up with a smile which seemed to have come direct from the company of the shining ones, he replied, "I see it now."

Let us not think for a moment that the Land of Beulah is a creation of the poet's fancy. It may be only the few who enjoy this sunny spot, but that many have revelled in the sight of heaven, and breathed its fragrant atmosphere before they have trodden the glorious City none need doubt. Would we secure this privilege? Oh, let us pray that the Spirit of God would give us that triumphant faith which rises above the perishable and clings only to the eternal. What we need is a deeper sense of

Christ's love, and more earnest desire to live as those whose best things are all to come. We want abiding confidence in Jesus. Then would the world have little hold upon us. Our treasure being in heaven our hearts would be there also. As it is, in religion we know little of singing birds and blooming flowers. We go mourning half our days among the mists of the valley instead of looking for the rising and shining sun. God grant that we may all tread the Land of Beulah—walk upon the high platform of Christian experience. This is peace—this is joy—this is the full assurance of faith—the fruits of the Spirit—the highest triumphs of the grace of God.

2. WHAT THE PILGRIMS EXPERIENCED IN THE LAND OF BEULAH.—Very beautifully has Bunyan described what Christian and Hopeful felt in this land. We notice, for the first thing, that they have *brightening hopes*. Their “rejoicing” increased at every step in their onward progress, and drawing near to the City they had “a more perfect view thereof.” They then saw something of what it consisted. “It was built of pearls and precious stones; also the streets thereof were paved with gold.” How instructive is all this.

As we rise in Christian experience, and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, get nearer to our bright and glorious home, how our conceptions of the place gather clearness, and how we revel in all descriptions by which the Word of God would convey some idea of its surpassing beauty and splendour to our imperfect understanding. How often have we sung:

“ When shall these eyes Thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold ?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold ? ”

Beloved, as we draw nearer still, it may be, we shall have “ a more perfect view thereof.” This is one of the sights of the Land of Beulah.

Another feeling our Pilgrims enjoyed was *longing desire*, “ By reason of the natural glory of the City, and the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick. Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease. Wherefore here they lay by it awhile, crying out because of their pangs, “ If ye see my Beloved, tell Him I am sick of love.” With the eyes fixed on this glorious sight, they were overpowered by the longing desire to reach it. Such raptures filled them that a holy impatience made them unwilling to wait for the remainder of the journey. Thus it is with the ripening saint, who in the border land of his heavenly home says with St. Paul, “ I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” There are moments at such a season when the immortal tenant can hardly be restrained from leaping from the frail house crumbling around it, and rising free and unfettered to its glorious home. It was probably thus with *Mr. Hervey*, who, when told he had but a few minutes to live, exclaimed, “ These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. Oh, welcome, welcome death ! thou mayst well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian.” To live is Christ, but

to die is gain." It was so perhaps with *Thomas Scott*. Just before he died, he said, "This is heaven begun. I have done with darkness *for ever—for ever*. Satan is vanquished. Nothing now remains but salvation with eternal glory!" Such are among the experiences of the Land of Beulah.

The last thing I shall notice in the experience of the Pilgrims is *delightful enjoyment*. A little strengthened, and better able to bear their sickness, they walked on their way, and came to orchards, vineyards, and gardens, with their gates opening into the highway. Seeing the gardener, they inquired the owner of these goodly vineyards and gardens. He told them they were the King's, and were planted for His own delights, and also for the solace of pilgrims. They were then permitted to refresh themselves with the dainties and inspect the King's walks and arbours, where He delighted to be; and here they tarried and slept. The Dreamer tells us he beheld that they talked in their sleep, and the gardener said to him, "Wherefore musest thou at the matter? It is the nature of the fruit of the grapes of these vineyards to go down so sweetly as to cause the lips of them that are asleep to speak." On awakening the Pilgrims addressed themselves to go up to the City. But the sun upon the City (of pure gold) was so extremely glorious that they could not as yet with open face behold it, but through an instrument made for the purpose. As they went on there met them two men in raiment that shone like gold, also their faces shone as the light. The men put several inquiries to the Pilgrims, and told them

that they would have but two difficulties more to meet with, and that then they would be in the City. Thus the Dreamer concludes the account of the Land of Beulah: "Christian then and his companion asked the men to go along with them: so they told them that they would; but, said they, you must obtain it by your own faith. So I saw in my dream that they went on together till they came in sight of the gate."

How true are the words of the wise man, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Prov. iv. 18. In this exquisitely beautiful description we have a picture of the matured Christian nearing his heavenly home in the enjoyment of divine ordinances and continual communion with God. There is a foretaste of heaven even on the brink of the River of Death; and, though the eye of faith, aided by the telescope of Scripture, can only see the City "as through a glass darkly," yet *it is seen*, and in the company of the bright and happy spirits who are "sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."—Heb. i. 14. Can we read this glowing account of Beulah's Land and not pray that we may realize it some day in our own experience? We have all to go down to the river. Shall we enjoy "the goodly vineyards and gardens" which the King has provided for the solace of pilgrims—the precious ordinances of His Church and the sweet promises of His Word? Shall we be able to know that the messengers of heaven are about us—beautiful in their form and dress, and still more beautiful in their conversation?

Ah, my reader, this is progress in the divine life, the faith which God's Spirit must commence and He alone can perfect and complete. It is only by faith—personal faith—that Death, our last enemy, can be conquered. Let this solemn thought abide in our minds. If ever we are to enjoy the fields of Beulah, the sweet experiences of the divine life, just outside the gate of heaven ; if ever we are to rise above the clouds of fear and doubt, and walk upon the tableland of Assurance, with the light of the City streaming about our heads, and the melodies of Heaven falling upon our ears, we must have faith in Christ, His Person, His work, His love, both true and strong, a faith which rests on the one foundation—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

But let not *the little-faith believer* be disheartened. It is not absolutely necessary that we should bask in the sunshine and behold the beauty of Beulah's Land. The question need not be "Have I joy?" Let all be absorbed by a far more important inquiry, "Have I Christ?" If the Saviour be your portion, you are as safe as the everlasting hills. Though little of the rapture which some have felt fall to your lot, you will finish your course with gladness when the gates of the Celestial City open to receive you. But, let us daily live cherishing the bright hopes which are the secret of that heavenly calm which God's people are summoned to enjoy. Let us endeavour to repose in "the full assurance of faith" on that loving Saviour who for us has taken the sting from death and shorn the grave of its victory. And let us not doubt that when our sun is setting

in this world, and we are going to the dark river, a truer and better light shall break upon us—a light which shall chase away the last shadow which has hung about our hearts, and bear us company into that glorious land where we shall see Jesus and join the ranks of those who serve Him day and night in His temple for ever.

“ Deathless principle arise !
Soar thou native of the skies !
Pearl of price, by Jesus bought,
To His glorious likeness wrought !
Go to shine before His throne ;
Deck His mediatorial crown ;
Go, His triumph to adorn :
Made for God, to God return.

Lo ! He beckons from on high :
Fearless to His presence fly :
Thine the merit of His blood,
Thine the righteousness of God !
Angels, joyful to attend,
Hovering, round thy pillow bend ;
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort thee quick to heaven.

Is thy earthly house distrest,
Willing to retain its guest ?
'Tis not thou—but it must die,
Fly, celestial tenant, fly !
Burst thy shackles ; drop thy clay ,
Sweetly breathe thyself away,
Singing, to thy crown remove,
Swift thy wing and fired with love.

See the haven full in view !
Love Divine shall bear thee through,
Trust to that propitious gale ;
Weigh the anchor, spread the sail.
Saints in glory perfect made,
Wait thy passage through the shade :
Ardent for thy coming o'er ;
See ! they throng the blissful shore.

Mount, their transports to improve ;
Join the longing choir above ;
Swiftly to their wish be given ;
Kindle higher joys in heaven—
Such the prospects that arise
To the dying Christian's eyes ;
Such the glorious vista, faith
Opens through the shades of death."



THIRTIETH DAY.

THE RIVER.

“What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?”

PSALM lxxxix. 48.

NONE have any difficulty in answering this question. That “it is appointed unto men once to die” all are compelled to admit; the rest of the passage—“after death the judgment”—a few in every age have been bold enough to deny. *“What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?”*

Death is the common lot. The most stalwart frame must succumb to “the last enemy.” Some, like the old castle, may stand long and gather the moss of years about them, but sooner or later they will come down. Nothing is more familiar to us than death. The withered flower in our hand reminds us of it. The passing funeral and crowded cemetery keep it before our eyes. However we may

view death and its issues, we cannot, as a fact, question it.

Southey longed for death that he might enjoy intellectual society. Foster longed for it that he might plunge into the mysteries of truth. Let us hope higher thoughts possessed the minds of these great men, for, if it were not so, what better were they than the Roman orator who desired Elysium that he might converse with Socrates and Plato?

The Christian knows that death is inevitable—fearful. He is sad at the thought of the absent faces and at the sight of the vacant chairs. But, at the remembrance of the land beyond, with all its purity, peace, and joy, the presence of Christ, the sunshine of the blessed, he feels the rock of confidence beneath his feet, the sure promise of his Master which cannot fail, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

This brings us to our subject for to-day—*The River*. Let us look at it under the following heads:

1. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL AT THE THOUGHT OF THE RIVER.
2. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL IN THE RIVER.
3. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER.

1. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL AT THE THOUGHT OF THE RIVER.—“Now I further saw that between them and the gate was a river; but there was no bridge to go over, and the river was deep. At the sight, therefore, of this river, the Pilgrims were much stunned; but the men that went with them said, You must go through, or you cannot come at the

gate. The Pilgrims then began to inquire if there was no other way to the gate. To which they answered, Yes; but there hath not any save two—to wit Enoch and Elijah—been permitted to tread that path since the foundation of the world; nor shall until the last trumpet shall sound. The Pilgrims then (especially Christian) began to despond, and looked this way and that, but could find no way by which they might escape the river. Then they asked the men if the waters were all of the same depth? They said No; yet they could not help them in that case: for, said they, you shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place.” Thus is the sunshine intercepted by the cloud. Yesterday we had our Pilgrims in the Land of Beulah rejoicing in “the full assurance of hope,” with the gates of the Celestial City in view before them, and hearts bounding with joyous expectation within them. Now they stand trembling on the brink of the bridgeless river, which must be crossed ere they could reach their glorious home.

And how sweetly simple, and withal how true to Scripture and experience, is the picture presented to us of Christian and Hopeful by the side of the dark water rolling at their feet. Let us see in all this the Believer brought face to face with death. Let us try to learn something which may serve to cheer and encourage us at the hour when we shall stand there. I would observe, *there is an instinctive dread of death*. The Pilgrims were stunned when they looked at the river. They were told that if they would come to the gate they must go through it, but

the sight of it overwhelmed them with fear. It is wise, it is right to divest death of that hideous character with which heathenism has invested it, and regard it in the Christian aspect as "but the messenger to bring home, sent to home-sick children at a boarding-school," but, hide it as we may, we have every one of us an instinctive dread of death. We feel that there is something terribly unnatural about it, the result of a condition of things which is utterly opposed to the beneficent designs of an infinitely loving and holy God. Its accompaniments—the destruction of all vigour, strength, grace, and beauty, the suffering, the partings, the procession, and the grave—its issues, either endless happiness in the society of the saved or endless misery in the company of the lost—throw about it a solemnity which some may affect to despise, but which in reality all feel.

You observe, both the pilgrims were stunned at the sight of the river. This conveys to us a valuable lesson. If we dread death we need not cherish the thought that we are altogether wanting in Christian faith and hope. Many of the best and holiest men and women who have ever lived have shared our fears with us, and, like Christian and Hopeful, "looked this way and that," in the vain attempt to evade death. The feeling is an instinct. It is the testimony of humanity to the fact that death has come into this beautiful world and was never meant to be there. Dying is a business from which we all shrink, but we must go through the river if we are to come at the gate. We see too, for another thing,

this dread of death will be more or less terrible according to the measure of our faith in Christ. The men could not help Christian and Hopeful as they stood by the river, and here was their reason, “for you shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place.”

Yesterday, we contemplated the deathbeds of several to whom the stream seemed to be shallow, and the distinguishing mark of each was a firm hold of Christ, a calm reliance on that Saviour who would never fail them, and a sure confidence in the promise of unchanging love, “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.” Here is the great secret. The River of Death is deeper or shallower as we believe in the King. Victory is the reward of faith. Is our grasp of Christ firm and true? Can we say “His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me?”—Cant. ii. 6. Then shall even a dying hour be a season of joy, and the death-bed a battle-field from which songs of triumph shall ascend. It has been so, and will be so again. But such is the victory of faith, the simple faith which lays hold of promise and fears no evil. The River of Death is deeper or shallower as we believe in the King of the place—He who could say “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”—Rev. i. 18.

My reader, are there times when the thought of death falls like a deep dark shadow over the heart? Do you shake your head and look sad at the question of the prophet, “How wilt thou do in the swelling

of Jordan?"—Jer. xii. 5. Do you believe in Christ, the King of the place, the one Redeemer of mankind. the only Saviour of the lost? Seek to have that belief, a belief which involves both trust and love, as the governing principle of your daily life, so that it may influence your entire conduct and conversation. Do not dwell in thought too much upon the river, but rather let your mind stretch to the bright and happy realms beyond it. And when the reality of the struggle which must come presses itself upon your attention with a power which you cannot resist, then know that dying moments will bring dying graces with them.

"In vain the fancy strives to paint
The moment after death ;
The glories which surround the saint
When yielding up his breath.

This much—and this is all we know,
They are supremely blest ;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest."

2. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL IN THE RIVER.—

"They then addressed themselves to the water, and, entering, Christian began to sink, and crying out to his good friend Hopeful he said, 'I sink in deep waters ; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me.' Then said the other, Be of good cheer, my brother ; I feel the bottom and it is good. Then said Christian, Ah ! my friend, 'the sorrows of death have compassed me about,' I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey. And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that

he could not see before him. Also here he in a great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he met with in the way of his pilgrimage. But all the words that he spoke still tended to discover that he had horror of mind, and heart fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate. Here also as they that stood by perceived, he was much in the troublesome thoughts of the sins that he had committed both since and before he began to be a pilgrim. It was also observed that he was troubled with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits; for ever and anon he would intimate as much by words. Hopeful therefore here had much ado to keep his brother's head above water; yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere a while, he would rise up again half dead. Hopeful also would endeavour to comfort him, saying, Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us: but Christian would answer, 'Tis you, 'tis you they wait for; you have been hopeful ever since I knew you. And so have you, said he to Christian. Ah, brother, said he, surely if I were right, He would now rise to help me; but for my sins He hath brought me into the snare, and hath left me. Then said Hopeful, My brother, you have quite forgot the text, where it is said of the wicked, 'There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm: they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' These troubles and distresses that you go through are no sign that God hath forsaken you; but are sent to try you, whether

you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses."

I have given you this passage in full because nothing can exceed its beautiful simplicity. It is a picture drawn by one who, taught by divine grace, was well acquainted with every phase of spiritual life. Christian and Hopeful in the river are intended to describe to us two distinct deathbeds. We at once perceive that while both of the pilgrims shrank from the cold stream at the first sight of it, when their feet were in it they had very different experience. Christian and Hopeful present us with a perfect contrast, and we at once see that believers must not be expected to be precisely the same in their deaths any more than in their lives.

Let us look at *Christian*. From the moment when he touched the water almost to that at which he stepped upon the bank he was the subject of doubt and dismay. Thick darkness spread itself about his mind and shut out the least glimmer of light from the past of "goodness and mercy." The most gloomy fear of never reaching the gate—of perishing after all—possessed him, and he even forgot all the songs he had sung in the house of his pilgrimage. Now, is this a true picture? Are there such deathbeds to be found? It is true—such are to be found. No one who has had any ministerial experience can fail to know that there have been many in the history of God's people. They have not only trembled at the brink of the river, but in it they have cried, "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me."

Beneath the attacks of Satan they have been fearfully crushed and wounded. They have doubted their conversion, their experiences, the very hopes which have inspired them with joy, the very promises which have been written down for their comfort—they have doubted everything. Such is the deathbed of the man true of heart but feeble in faith. The waters are very—very deep.

Let us look at *Hopeful*. He to a certain extent shared his brother's dread of the river. All shrink from that "cold flood." It has a voice of alarm for every one of us. We see in it the common lot—we read in it the curse of sin. But Hopeful is in the river, and, while Christian is sinking, he joyfully encourages him with the cry, "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good." He comforted poor Christian with the assurance that he could see the gate, and the men waiting to receive them. He recalled the fact to him that the wicked were strangers to such seasons of weakness and fear, and that instead of his trouble being a sign of God having left him, it was rather a trial of his faith, intended to show if he could live upon God as well in the darkness as he had done in the light. Again I ask is this a true picture? It is. There are death-beds on which there is such sunshine that we have no more doubt that troops of angels are about them than that the light of heaven is there. There is a faith which drives Satan from the field, and can always feel the bottom of the stream. Such is the death of the man who, while not more true in heart than the other, is strong in faith. The waters are very—very shallow.

The wicked have "no bands in their death." It was of this Hopeful reminded his poor sinking brother. The King of Prussia would see his army defile before he died. Napoleon would be arrayed in his military dress, that he might meet, as a soldier should, his last enemy. Thousands among the unconverted close their eyes with no remorse of conscience and no expression of alarm. But with the believer death is often a season of fearful conflict. Yet victory comes at last.

"Then I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse awhile. To whom also Hopeful added these words, 'Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' And with that Christian brake out in a loud voice, Oh, I see Him again ! and He tells me 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' Then they both took courage, and the enemy was after that as still as a stone, until they were gone over. Christian therefore presently found ground to stand upon, and so it followed that the rest of the river was but shallow : thus they got over."

True to the life again is "the glorious dreamer." In the biography of Janeway we are told that the holy man, upon his death-bed, was for days in spiritual darkness. He was plunged into the deepest waters of anguish. In his distress he begged his son to pray for him. He did, and the light burst in. He joyfully exclaimed "O son, it is come, it is come ! I bless God I can die. I know now what that sentence means—'The peace of God that passeth all understanding.'" Let those who, like Hopeful, have

felt the bottom of the stream and seen the shining ones on the bank, encourage our fainting hearts in the prospect of that stormy sea which lies before each one of us. Such believers are like those priests of old who stood in the midst of Jordan until the people had passed clean over. Seeing that the depth of the stream depends on the measure of faith we have in the King of the place, let us pray that our faith in Christ and our confidence in His promise may grow stronger as we get nearer to that cold flood which separates us from the Celestial City. What is wanted is the settled conviction that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin, that His perfect righteousness will present us pardoned and accepted at the last great day, that He who hath loved us will never leave us, and that when our feet are in the river He will bear us through and take us to the company of the shining ones who on the other side wait to bid us welcome and conduct us to our eternal home.

I have very few words for my third point.

3. CHRISTIAN AND HOPEFUL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER.—“Now upon the bank of the river on the other side they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore being come out of the river they saluted them saying, ‘We are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.’ Thus they went along towards the gate.”

Let the last cloud of doubt roll away before the sunlight of this glorious picture. The earthly house

is dissolved—the waters are passed—the retinue of two shall soon be swelled into the company which no man can number—and—the Pilgrims will be at Home.

Courage then, Believer, follow them who,
“through faith and patience inherit the promises.”
All is well.

“What is this that steals upon my frame?
Is it death?
Which soon will quench the vital flame,
Is it death?
If this be death I soon shall be
From every sin and sorrow free,
I shall the King of Glory see!
All is well.

I now am stepping on the shore,
All is well :
My struggles here will soon be o'er,
All is well.
My soul is free from every fear,
My hope is full, my title clear,
And best of all, the Lord is here !
All is well.

Cease, cease to weep, my friends for me :
All is well :
My sins are pardoned, I am free,
All is well.
The monster death has lost his sting,
My happy soul is on the wing,
Beyond the grave I soon shall sing—
All is well.

The sweat of death is on my brow,
All is well ;
My feet are in the river now,
All is well.
There's not a cloud that can arise
To hide my Saviour from my eyes :
I soon shall mount the upper skies—
All is well !

Tune, tune your harps, ye saints, in glory,
All is well ;
And I'll repeat the pleasing story—
All is well.

Bright angels are from glory come,
I hear them whisp'ring in my room,
They wait to waft my spirit home—
All is well.

Hark ! hark ! my Lord and Master calls me,
All is well ;
I come to see Thy face in glory,
All is well.

Farewell, my friends, adieu ! adieu !
I can no longer stay with you,
My glittering crown appears in view !
All is well."



THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

“ These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—REV. vii. 14.

IN this wonderful portion of the inspired volume we have the picture of that vast multitude of the redeemed who, having done with all the sin and sorrow of the earth, bask in the everlasting sunshine of heaven. One of the elders in those glorious realms puts the question to the apocalyptic seer, “ What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they ? ” To this question John replies, “ Sir, thou knowest ; ” and the elder returns the magnificent answer which is to introduce us to our subject for to-day—“ *These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* ”

Yesterday we saw our Pilgrims through the river with their feet upon the eternal shore. We left them, you will remember, making their way to the gate. Now we have to see them safely home in the City of the Living God, and, having left them there let us try to rise to the grandeur of our theme, and press forward to the same everlasting joys. The language which the Elder addressed to John will present to us Christian and Hopeful freed from all further toil and trial entering the high realms of blessedness at last. We shall see them accepted and admitted not for anything they have done or been, but because of the love they had borne to the King of the place—He who had redeemed them with His blood, made them kings and priests, and prepared them for the mansions in His Father's house.

That we may miss nothing of this closing scene in our immortal Allegory let us carefully examine the following points suggested to us.

1. THE JOURNEY TO THE GATE.
2. THE RECEPTION IN THE CITY.
3. THE FATE OF IGNORANCE.

1. THE JOURNEY TO THE GATE.—The city, “that great city, the holy Jerusalem,” is described as standing high upon a mighty hill, but the Pilgrims went up it easily for two reasons: first because the two men with them led them by the arms, and secondly, because they had left their mortal garments in the river. Very sweetly is it said, “They therefore went up here with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the city was

framed was higher than the clouds. They therefore went up through the regions of the air, sweetly talking as they went; being comforted because they safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them." Let but the River of Death be passed and we shall have lost every encumbrance which has impeded our progress. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."—2 Cor. v. 1-4. All these "mortal garments" will be left behind in the river, and, deprived not only of all sin, but even of all tendency towards it, we shall press onward and upward, light of step and lighter still of heart, to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

The conversation with the shining ones was about the glory of the place. The beauty and glory of it were inexpressible, but it was the paradise of God, wherein was the Tree of Life from which the never-fading fruit should be gathered. They should have white robes, and walk and talk every day with the King, and lose all contact with sorrow, sickness, and death, for the former things would have passed away. They should enjoy the company of the patriarchs who have been "taken away from the evil to come,"

and are now "resting upon their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Their occupation would consist in receiving comfort for all their toil, joy for all their sorrow, reaping what they have sown, even the fruit of all their prayers, and tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. They must wear crowns of gold and enjoy the perpetual sight and vision of the Holy One, for they should see Him as He is. They should serve Him continually without any of that infirmity of the flesh which interfered so much with their service upon earth. They should be delighted with the sight of the Mighty One and hear His pleasant voice. They should enjoy the company of the friends gone before, and receive with joy those who should follow them. They should be dressed and attended in a manner suited to the place and the presence of the King of Glory. And when He shall come with the sound of trumpet in the cloud they should come with Him, sit by Him when He occupies His throne of judgment, and have a voice in the sentence He shall pass upon His enemies. And finally, when He shall return to the City, they should accompany Him with sound of trumpet and be ever with Him.

My reader, can anything be more thoroughly scriptural and more truly animating than this? Every word is an echo of those beautiful descriptions of heaven with which the Word of God supplies us. There is nothing overdrawn—nothing too highly coloured—but the whole is a transfer to other pages of those glorious scenes which prophets and apostles have described. The language of St. Paul, St. John,

and St. Jude we recall. The predictions of Daniel rise to our memory. There is not a word for which we have not warrant in the volume of inspiration, and we see in it everything calculated to inspire us with joy—a foretaste of the home for which we are daily longing, a glimpse of the glory which has yet to be revealed.

And when we think of a condition of being in which we shall have parted with all sin and sorrow, when we shall have lost every infirmity of the flesh, when we shall be clothed with perfect unsullied purity, enjoy the company of those of whom we have read and whom we have longed so much to know, and, above all, when we shall see Jesus as He is, and realize the fact that with Him and near Him we shall remain for all eternity, oh how willingly we grasp the sword of present conflict, and press onward to that “Holy City” where we shall behold the King in his beauty, and have done with all toil and pain, and weariness for ever.

Such thoughts as these should greatly cheer us. It may be “much tribulation” will have been our portion, but which of us will regret the cross by the way when we have reached the crown at the end?

Suffer me to ask you if you have reason for believing that you are among those who, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and sustained by the loving grace of God, are making their way to all this blessedness?

Let us not deceive ourselves. Nothing but a personal abiding interest in Christ will do. We must have a deep sense of Sin. We must know that

only a simple child-like faith in our Saviour can insure us the happiness of the saved. We must deny all ungodliness, live daily in the practice of every Christian virtue, and have something of heaven in us while we pursue our pilgrim-way along this vale of tears. Then let us not doubt. We shall ere long know far more of the glorious things which are spoken of Zion, the City of our God. We wait for that day—we pray for it—we long for it.

As the Pilgrims drew towards the gate a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them, and let us particularly notice the manner in which the shining ones introduced them. There was no mention of great deeds which had gained earthly distinctions for them, no remembrance even of loving work which had helped on humanity in its intelligence and civilization. Here was the glowing tribute: "These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for His holy name, and he hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy." Then arose the shout of the heavenly host, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Then the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, saluted them with ten thousand welcomes from the world, and the great body-guard of bright and happy spirits went, some before, some behind, some on the right hand, and some on the left, and the whole scene looked to Christian and Hopeful as if heaven itself were come down to meet them.

Thus they walked on together. Very sweetly does the Dreamer bring them to the City. "And now were these two men, as it were in heaven before they came at it, being swallowed up with the sight of the angels, and with hearing their melodious notes. Here also they had the City itself in view: and they thought they heard all the bells therein to ring, to welcome them thereto. But, above all, the warm and joyful thoughts that they had about their own dwelling there with such company, and that for ever and ever: oh! by what tongue, or pen, can their glorious joy be expressed? Thus they came up to the gate."

How instructive is all this. Who are those to whom the ministering spirits are sent as to the heirs of Salvation? Not the great, the noble, the wealthy, and the wise, as the world counts greatness, nobility, wealth, and wisdom, but those who have loved our Lord, and denied themselves for His sake; in other words, those who by faith in Christ, His person and His work, "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and striven to live to the glory of Him who has loved them and given Himself for them.

And does not the inexpressibly glorious picture presented to us here make our hearts beat with joy and fill us with longings to mingle in such bright and happy scenes? Oh, child of God, suffer not the world to gather round you too closely. Ever be looking above and beyond it to the glory which shall be revealed.

“There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given !
There is a tear for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast,
'Tis found above—in heaven.

There is a soft, a downy bed,
'Tis fair as breath of even ;
A couch for weary mortals spread,
Where they may rest their aching head,
And find repose in heaven !”

2. THE RECEPTION INTO THE CITY.—As they came up to the gate they saw these words written over it in letters of gold—“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Bidden by the shining men to call at the gate, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, and others looked over it and received the intelligence, “These Pilgrims are from the City of Destruction, for the love they bear to the King of this place.” Then the Pilgrims gave in each man his certificate which were carried to the King. These having been read and approved the order was issued—“Open the gate, that the righteous nation that keepeth truth may enter in.”

Let us not spoil by the change of a single word the description of Christian and Hopeful's entrance into the city.

“Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate ; and lo ! as they entered, they were transfigured ; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them ; the harps to praise withal, the crowns in token of honour.

“Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them ‘Enter ye into the joy of our Lord.’ I also heard the men themselves sing with a loud voice, saying, ‘Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’

“Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun ; the streets also were paved with gold ; and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord ! And after that they shut up the gates : which when I had seen I wished myself among them.”

We can only gather a tithe of what may be learned from this most beautiful and animated description. Who are they that have the right or privilege to the tree of life, and to enter through the gates into the city ? Those that “do His commandments,” and these are counted “blessed ” or happy.

My dear readers, the promises of the Gospel are such that they hold out encouragement to the chief of sinners. There is not one of us who need be excluded from the blessings of Redemption.

What is God’s commandment ? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ” and attached to that is a most precious promise—“and thou shalt be saved.” Can we count any happy or blessed who reject this prescription of infinite love, and, in their pride of heart,

refuse such proffered mercy? God's people, therefore let us see, are an obedient people—a people who have obeyed His commandments, and are permitted to claim the privilege of the tree of life and entrance into “the City which hath foundations whose Maker and Builder is God.” Let us see further that the Pilgrims gave in their *Certificates*. These examined—found correct—the seal and signature upon them—the order is immediately issued “open the gate.”

How beautifully does this set forth the fitness for heaven which, in addition to the title to heaven, becomes the believer's portion. He is not only cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, but also *sanctified or made holy* by the Spirit of God. Here is his *certificate*, and wanting this he cannot enter the city, for “without holiness no man can see the Lord.”

How great is the comfort in all this. “There is no condemnation.” The King cannot reject His own handwriting, neither can He deny His own image. Oh! glorious prospect. The toilsome day over, the mighty work accomplished, every difficulty conquered, every danger passed, the gate shall open, and weary Pilgrims will be at home. And how utterly language fails in the effort to describe the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem. It may tell us of resplendent raiments, of harps and crowns, of golden streets and ringing bells, and praising voices; but, alas, it breaks down in the attempt, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.”

Let us be willing to wait until the happy moment when, transfigured and transformed, every film shall have fallen from our eyes, and we shall see Heaven, not from afar, but from its midst, surrounded with its glories and in the enjoyment of its eternal peace.

Oh, how we should long for it, and, as we journey onward, beset with all the difficulties of our wilderness-way, let us cherish the bright visions of the future, and know that there is a land where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and where we shall serve God, without any one of our present weaknesses and imperfections, day and night in His temple for ever.

3. THE FATE OF IGNORANCE.—As the Dreamer was gazing upon all these things he turned his head and saw IGNORANCE coming up to the river side. You remember how this self-righteous professor of religion turned scornfully from Hopeful with the reply “that is your faith, but not mine: yet mine I doubt not is as good as yours, though I have not in my head so many whimsies as you.” Once more we see this miserable man, the type of tens of thousands, and we see his end.

It seems he reached the other side of the River of Death without half the difficulty Christian and Hopeful had experienced. The secret was VAIN-HOPE, a ferryman, helped him over. He ascended the hill as the others did, but he came up to the gate alone, and no one met him with the least encouragement. He read the inscription over the gate, and he

began to knock expecting instant admission. The men who looked over the top of the gate asked him "Whence came you, and what would you have"? He answered "I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets." The men then asked him for his certificate, that they might go and show it to the King. But, alas, he had none. He fumbled in his bosom, but in vain. "Have you none?" said they; but he was speechless. How different was the order sent forth to that which opened the gate to the Christian Pilgrims. It was "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away." Then we read that he was carried through the air to the door in the side of the hill, and left there. How sadly and sorrowfully does the Dreamer add—himself supplying one of his most solemn lessons as he closes the first part of his immortal work—"Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a dream."

Let the fate of *Ignorance* sound the note of warning in the ears of the unconverted. Such men "have no bands in their death." Vain-hope may ferry them over the dark river. But there will be no entrance for them at the Gate. They have no *Certificate*. Unsanctified by the Spirit they have no meetness for heaven. Their doom is destruction—their end everlasting despair.

And now, my dear reader, as I bring these meditations to a close, allow me to hope that the time which we have devoted to them has been both pleasant and profitable. We have accompanied our Pilgrim

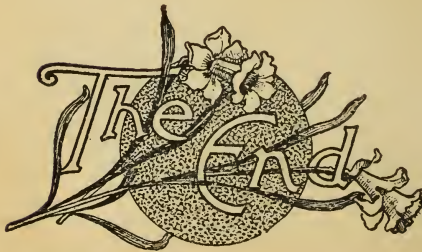
from the City of Destruction, and we now leave him in his celestial home. We have contemplated him at every step of his journey. We have gathered lessons as weighty and important as any writer can draw or any reader receive.

And now let us each pray that Christian's holy, happy decision may be ours—that we may resolve at any cost to reach heaven—and, washed in the blood of Christ, and sustained, governed, and guided by the Spirit of God, like him we shall triumph, and God will open to us the gates of glory.

“Soldier, go—but do not claim
Mouldering spoils of earth-born treasure,
Not to build a vaunting name,
Not to dwell in tents of pleasure.
Dream not that the way is smooth,
Hope not that the thorns are roses;
Turn no wishful eye of youth
Where the sunny beam reposes—
Thou hast sterner work to do,
Hosts to cut thy passage through;
Close behind the gulfs are burning—
Forward!—there is no returning.

Soldier, rest—but not for thee
Spreads the world her downy pillow;
On the rock thy couch must be,
While around thee chafes the billow;
Thine must be a watchful sleep,
Wearier than another's waking;
Such a charge as thou dost keep
Brooks no moment of forsaking.
Sleep as on the battle-field,
Girded—grasping sword and shield;
Those thou canst not name or number,
Steal upon thy broken slumber.

Soldier, rise — the war is done;
Lo! the hosts of hell are flying;
'Twas thy Lord the battle won;
Jesus vanquished them by dying.
Pass the stream—before thee lies
All the conquered land of glory;
Hark! what songs of rapture rise,
These proclaim the victor's story,
Soldier, lay thy weapon down,
Quit the sword and take the crown;
Triumph! all thy foes are banished,
Death is slain, and earth has vanished."



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